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# TO BE, OR NOT TO BE?

A Nobel.

BY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN,

AUTHOR OF "THE IMPROVISATORE."

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH.

BY MRS. BUSHBY.

"TO BE, OR NOT TO BE? THAT IS THE QUESTION."

SHAKESPEARE.



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**Dedicated**

TO

**CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.,**

BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

**HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.**





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# TO BE, OR NOT TO BE?

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## CHAPTER I.

THE OLD CLERGYMAN, "THE GENERAL'S BROTHER," AND  
SEVERAL NOTABLE PERSONS.

"BRING me a good book when you come home," said the clergyman's daughter.

"And bring me a bad boy—the son of wicked parents—that I may make a good Christian of him," added the clergyman's wife, while the worthy divine was settling himself in the carriage, and they were wrapping his cloak well round him, on account of the sharp westerly wind.

The clergyman—the old Japetus Mollerup—was once more about to re-visit Copenhagen, where he had not been for thirty years. It is easy to get there now, for there is a steamer to it from Aarhus. He was a lively, warm-hearted old man, and a devout and truthful expounder of the Word of God;—he had but one foible, and, if that must be named, it was that he

smoked a great deal of tobacco, and very bad tobacco to boot : this was not to be denied, and was the first impression one always had of him. Every portion of his clothing, to the most minute article, was so impregnated with this tobacco smoke, that if it were sent over every sea in the world, it would still retain the odour of the close, nasty, cherished canister ; though at the place where he put up on first arriving at Copenhagen it was not likely to be remarked : it was at Regentsen,\* with a relation, who was a student there, and who, moreover, resided in the same apartments in which Japetus Mollerup, with a chum, had lived in his student days.

In these two rooms everything was neatly arranged, and well dusted ; the coats and pantaloons were hung up in a corner, concealed from view ; the books stood in orderly rows ; and the table, where, in general, papers, lectures, a plate with bread and butter, an inkstand, and sundry false collars, were to be seen lying together in dire confusion, sported a clean cover ; and all this had been the work of the student himself, who was then the tenant of the rooms—for there were too many other things to be looked after by Poul, which could only be done by him. Poul, the common attendant on several of the students, a tall, respectable-looking person, was called by the witty lodgers a man who occupied the highest position in “the King’s Copenhagen.” He was the porter, and also the janitor of

\* A college in Copenhagen.

the astronomical observatory up in the round tower: there he resided above all authorities, with the exception of the watchman of the church tower. He descended every morning from his altitude, to blacken the students' boots and brush their clothes; and in the afternoon he went errands into the town, in which he had a good assistant in his little son Niels, who was clever and wide awake, and, indeed, somewhat of a Latin scholar, as we shall perceive by-and-by. On this occasion there was much to be sent for—a flask of the extract of punch, some good cheese, and sausages of different kinds, were absolutely required.

The honoured guest of the evening—old Japetus—was the first to make his appearance. He was equipped in his best clothes, made by a Jutland village tailor, who travelled through different districts, and did the needful in the way of clothing, both for the masters and their servants. The old clergyman looked exceedingly respectable in his black coat and with his silver gray hair; his countenance beamed with joy as he stood once more in his old well-known rooms, and saw around him there his nephew and the sons of some old friends. "It was so strange," he said, "to be again with young people in these old scenes of bygone days."

It is delightful to find people who are advanced in life able to be young among the youthful.

The little party was entirely composed of Jutlanders, with one exception, and he might have been supposed

to be the master of the corporation of students. He was a friend of the nephew, and had formerly been prepared for the University by the old clergyman—for this reason he was asked to be of the party. He was called “the General’s brother,”—and who was he, and who was the General? Well, he was only General in abbreviation—it takes so long a time to say “Commissary General at War,” that he allowed himself to be called “General,” and his wife “Mrs. General.” It was through her—and through the channel of matrimony—that he had become somebody—the brother, on the contrary, had not followed any channel;—he was a sort of a genius; his fortune, and still worse his future prospects, had been swamped in trying inventions, no better than air-balloons, and which, consequently, had evaporated into nothing. He was intended by nature to become a patron of the arts, a Mæcenas, to live for the beautiful,—but no one can live *upon* the beautiful, for that is soon eaten up. Now, he obtained his frugal livelihood by correcting the press, and by purchasing at auctions valuable old books and engravings, which he sold to collectors. He was usually blessed with a large fund of good spirits, and often, even though looking on the dark side of things in this world, he would laugh at them, at himself, and at his brother “the General;” but there were times when he fell into the saddest moods, apparently overwhelmed both in body and soul; he then was absolutely ill, avoided every one, and remained locked up in his

solitary room ; but when this attack of spleen was over, he became doubly gay, and ridiculed himself for his past bad spirits. This evening he was the most lively of them all.

When the punch was introduced, the old clergyman would only be persuaded to take one glass : he was afraid of being too much excited. He found it so very pleasant to be in Copenhagen—to mingle among the actors in its stirring scenes of busy life. Copenhagen had many advantages ; but the high houses, the narrow streets, opposite neighbours, families up stairs and down stairs—all this he thought was a little too much like Noah's ark.

"But one can live in freedom and comfort notwithstanding," said the General's brother, whose proper appellation, "Herr Svane," we may as well accord to him. "I hope that my old friend will come up and see my tiny domicile ; it is at the back of a house, but has a prospect which could not be surpassed in Venice. The great canal from Knippelsbro to Toldboden lies immediately under my window ; the waters of the Rhine itself are not so clear and green as those of this canal ; one also sees the Holm, the docks, and dockyards, spires, and vessels upon vessels."

"Bless me !" cried the clergyman ; "why yes, I should like to see all that, and I shall certainly pay you a visit. But what are you about now ? Have you no regular occupation ?"

"I am busy with falling stars !" replied Herr



Svane. "My ideas come like flashes across me, and then pass away. I am thinking of a tragedy, but I have not written it; I am collecting materials for a 'People's Book,' which will never be in manuscript until——"

"And the tragedy which you have never written?"

"It is a tragedy in which no one dies, but in which the hero pines away, as one can pine without life taking its departure; when that goes there will be an end to the pining, and to the tragedy along with it. The subject of my tragedy is AMBROSIVS STUB, the Danish poet, who sang such sweet harmonious verses; he who went as jester to the banquets of the nobles of Funen, and played the buffoon to people far beneath his feet in point of genius and mind. But it will not be written; I have it within me, and derive pleasure from it myself, without hearing other folks' twaddle about it."

"But put it on paper, even if it should always remain there!" said the old minister.

"It would be useless! How much is there not lying by, neglected and forgotten, of which the new generation little dream! It would be perhaps a praiseworthy action to publish such a work as '*A Revival of forgotten Authors*,'—to dish up the good which has been forgotten, and ought not to have been so. You see here is an idea—a falling star, such as is soon extinguished. But we were talking of your paying me a visit. Can we not fix a time to see the objects of

interest in my house ? It is a kind of bird-cage, an air-balloon ; it is quite an old curiosity shop."

"It must be viewed through Hoffmann's eyes then," said one of the party.

"Oh, I dare say I shall find plenty to see," observed the clergyman.

"And here comes the best possible guide," said Herr Svane, as little Niels, Poul of the round tower's son, entered with a caraff of water. "This is my god-son," he added. "Did I not stand father to you, my boy?"

Niels nodded assent, with a smile.

"He knows the 'Thousand and One Nights,' and Latin into the bargain."

"Else he might not presume to tread these learned boards," was remarked.

It was very easy to perceive that the child was lively and smart. The young men had taken a fancy to him ; he had a passion for reading, and a capability for learning quickly ; he could repeat a good deal of poetry—actually even one of the Odes of Horace : he had been shown one day—

*"Mæcenatavis edite regibus,"*

and told, "If you can learn this by heart, and carry it in your head all the way down from the round tower, you will be quite a Latin scholar, and shall be entitled to come hither—the stronghold of learning—to bring us butter and salt herrings !"

The boy read and learned the ode, and from that time forth he was called a Latinist, and each of the students looked upon himself as his Mæcenas.

"He is the youngest Latin scholar among us," they said, as they bestowed half a glass of punch upon him ; but he was obliged to recite his ode from Horace, which he did correctly, and without any demur.

"He will make his fortune," said Herr Svane, "not because he is my godson, but because he is of high birth, and that goes a great way. He was born as high as anybody could be born ; he first saw the light up yonder at the top of the round tower, where he now lives with his father, and looks after the stars. His mother is dead."

The next forenoon, at an hour fixed, Niels was to be in "Old Avlsgaard," where the Rev. Japetus Mollerup lodged, and from thence at eleven o'clock was to show him the way to Herr Svane's. Such was the arrangement, and Niels could be depended upon.

It was not later than nine o'clock that evening when the worthy clergyman broke up the party, for he felt tired ; but to-morrow——! Ah ! what was that day to bring forth ? Upon this the good clergyman's thoughts dwelt, as he laid himself down in his bed in the "Old Avlsgaard." Upon this, little Niels' thoughts dwelt, as he ascended with his father to the small room at the very top of the round tower, where they resided.

What is that day—to-morrow—ever to bring forth ?

It is well that we can never know. Here, it became a day of doom—a day of vital importance—a day of life and death in more than one signification.

Herr Svane lived, as has been said, at the back of a house in Amalie Street, near to where the Casino is now built. A narrow and not over-clean kitchen staircase led up to a very confined landing-place, which looked even smaller than it was from its being lumbered with a variety of articles which were placed there; it was anything but comfortable—one would have thought that it was the weekly-cleaning day, Saturday, or rather that the household were removing, and all things therefore in confusion; but every day was the same—and through this wretched passage, where the light moreover was as dim as twilight, Herr Svane's small rooms were entered. Diminutive as it was, however, there was something rather pleasant about his sitting-room—the walls were pasted all over with pictures and verses, such as one sees on old screens, quaint advertisements, cut out of newspapers, anecdotes and poems, were placed helter-skelter amidst engravings coloured and not coloured; book-cases, extending from the floor to the ceiling, and filled with books, stood on either side of the only, but very large, window, over which were trained tendrils of fresh ivy, forming quite a green garland. The prospect from this window extended over Pakhuspladsen, the broad salt water, Nyholm, with its crane, with its large buildings, its leafy trees and green sward, a lake opening into the

Baltic, into which ships entered under full sail. Herr Svane stood with a smile, that said—"These are my belongings! It is unnecessary for me to travel to foreign countries, people come from foreign lands here—close by me!" He looked around his little room, the door of his sleeping chamber was partly open, and all was clean and tidy—it did his landlady honour: One forgot the dire confusion outside in the passage. A cloth of dazzling whiteness was spread over a small table, and a plate well heaped with cakes of various kinds stood on it; behind it was a little, old carved press, on which were to be seen various toys; one might have fancied that Herr Svane kept toys for all the children in town.

The clock struck eleven, but Japetus Mollerup, the old clergyman, had not yet made his appearance, neither had little Niels come, who was to have been his guide, and who was so punctual and trustworthy. The maid-of-all-work, where Herr Svane lived, who was in the habit of bringing up warm water to make his tea or coffee, had already three times ascended the stairs to ask if she should bring the chocolate, for that was the worthy minister's favourite beverage. But what had become of him—and what had become of Niels?

Twelve o'clock struck—surely they would soon come!

At length steps were heard upon the stairs, and a knock at the door—it was the clergyman, but alone, without his little guide. Niels had not been to him;

in vain he waited till twelve o'clock—then, his patience being nearly exhausted, he had found his way himself.

What could be the matter, that Niels, who was generally so punctual, had not presented himself? His errand of to-day had assuredly been his principal thought early in the morning, it had also been his father's thought—and yet—— How was this matter to be cleared up? There was a reason for it, of which neither the clergyman nor Herr Svane had the most remote conception.

A learned professor said in one of his lectures, wherein he wished to give an idea of the wonderful construction of the human body:

“The brain is the seat of the soul—that is to say, the principal one; the spinal marrow is but the great channel through which the orders it issues are carried out; thence diverge the electro-magnetic threads of the nerves. The brain commands; I will this or that—then the machinery is set in motion—the limbs perform their task, and with *that* intellect has little or nothing to do; it has nothing to think of. The foot is lifted and moved—the impulse has been given—the limbs obey the prescribed orders until new ones are issued; but in the meantime the soul betakes itself to other work, and thinks upon the past and the future.”

It is something that we live over every hour; but the miracle is, we are so accustomed to it, that we

never think about it. At any rate Poul of the round tower did not, when early in the morning he went out, and stood in the street doubting whether he should turn to his right hand or to his left. He had errands to execute in both directions. He stood, as has been said, a moment still—the soul had not delivered its orders to the limbs, whether they should turn to the right or to the left—both were at hand—and—well ! there must be a still higher power than the spirit that commands—Poul turned to the left, and thus an event occurred of the greatest importance to himself, to his son, and to all who read these pages.

How much may depend on the decision of a single moment, whether to turn to the right or to the left ! The order was now given—the feet were in motion—a large placard, upon which was painted the figure of a bullock was placed above, just round the corner—he must look at it for a moment—but with what was that moment fraught ! The man turned round the corner into the by-street, and there—exactly as if it had been thrown down on purpose—fell at that instant a window from the third story, out of the hand of a servant girl, and struck poor Poul on the head ! He sank to the ground—not dead, but with a wound severe enough to cause death. People hastened to his assistance—he was carried first to a barber's near, and then to the hospital, where one of the young physicians recognised him as belonging to Regentsen.

When Niels was about to go to Avlsgaard, and was

leaving the tower for that purpose, a boy came up to him and looked fixedly at him.

"What are you staring at me for, boy?" he asked.

"Because your father has been killed by a window—you know it very well."

"You are not speaking a word of truth."

"What! Do you accuse me of lying?"

Niels was much shocked, but still there was something in the boy's manner which prevented his believing him, and he would have set off for "Old Avlsgaard," had not Mother Börre, the apple-woman, who sat at the entrance to the tower and sold fruit, questioned the stranger boy minutely, and on hearing the dreadful particulars, terrified Niels, whom she advised to give up his errand to the clergyman, and hasten to his father, to whom some accident had surely happened. Niels ran as fast as he could to the hospital, but when he arrived there his poor father was dead!

Japetus Mollerup and Herr Svane were sitting together engaged in pleasant conversation, and had just finished the last cup of chocolate. Herr Svane declared that Niels could not be ill, for in that case his father would have come in his stead—something else must have occurred—"Perhaps there were some dogs in the street, for they are his great terror," said Herr Svane, "He will take ever so long a round to avoid a dog—he is only a coward where that animal is concerned."



At that moment the door opened and Niels came in, crying and sobbing. "My father is killed!" were the first words he uttered, and it was some time before they could draw from him, amidst his sobs, the whole of the sad story.

It is heartrending to see a poor suffering child, to know that he is left friendless, and that he is aware of this himself.

"Poor boy, poor boy!" cried the old clergyman; and inquired what relatives he had, and what home he would now have in town.

"He has none!" replied Herr Svane, "I am his godfather, and I believe that is his nearest family tie. Come, dry your tears, my boy, crying won't do any good, God will help you!"

"He has none!" replied the clergyman; "no one to look to! God's ways are inscrutable!" and the old man looked sorrowfully at the child.

Niels was indeed entirely destitute; charitable people or the poor-house—we do not name them together by way of a contrast—must receive him.

His wife's words on his leaving home, "Bring me a bad boy that I may make a good Christian of him," came rushing on the good clergyman's mind; but Niels was not a bad boy, he was not the son of depraved parents, as far as he could hear.

Japetus Mollerup had been well inclined towards Niels since the preceding evening—he seemed a smart sensible boy—and he evinced a good memory, since he

could repeat the whole of one of Horace's odes. He was left so forlorn—in such affliction—if he had only been a neglected child—"a bad boy" the worthy man would have taken him at once, but under the circumstances he wavered from sheer conscientiousness. Well did he know that the good lady would be quite satisfied with his selection and proceedings; she resembled, without knowing it, the pupils of Pythagoras, who believed implicitly the dictates of their master, and, if anything doubtful were mooted, gave up the matter with *αὐτὸς ἔφα* (he said so himself); what the head of the family at the vicarage said was law there—should he in this instance make use of his power and act with entire independence? He reflected on both sides of the question, and finally confided his thoughts to Herr Svane.

"Very good, very good, indeed!" said that gentleman, after having listened to his friend's account of the commission entrusted to him, and his ideas respecting its fulfilment; but he could not help laughing at the worthy man's punctilio and fastidious adherence to the letter of his promise.

"So you want a bad boy," he continued; "a very immoral, corrupted child? The Lord has willed it more wisely! Does it not seem as if He himself had presented to you what you sought—but given it to you in a better shape? you must absolutely have something wrong to correct, it seems, something to reform—well, there is plenty to do here. He has got

a touch of the devil in him : is not that true, Niels ? Nevertheless, he will be a credit to you. Come, you shall not escape my eloquence until you say you will take him. As his godfather I promised at the baptismal font to provide for his being brought up a Christian. His parents have relinquished that duty, therefore it falls more imperatively on me.

Jápetus Mollerup pondered upon the matter—he appeared kindly disposed towards the child—but could not come to any decision. Herr Svane pleaded the cause in jest and in earnest.

“Nobody knows into whose hands the boy may fall here, in town; talent is a good gift when properly cultivated, but otherwise—come now—a fine smart boy he is, and plenty of the devil in him !”

The tears that stood in the poor boy’s eyes gave ample weight to his advocate’s oratory, and the good clergyman’s resolution was taken. He felt that he could answer to his wife, and to his conscience, for assuming the charge of this child.

Niels was then to leave Copenhagen, to accompany his protector to Jutland, and to enter on quiet country life, in the minister’s house on the heath.

It was a wonderful piece of good fortune in the midst of his misfortunes, everybody said ; and in his little heart so also felt Niels. The novelty before him, the sudden change in his situation, occupied his thoughts, and, after having wept bitterly over his father’s coffin, sunshine again visited his young mind.

He bade farewell to his friends at Regentsen, and the round tower, his home up there. Ah ! that contained, in one sum, the whole of his life and past career ; and, therefore, before commencing our journey with him far from the place where no vista of the future had been awakened in his soul, we must become acquainted, as he was, with that early home of which he carried a treasured remembrance to the distant heath, and afterwards through all the excitements of life.

We shall ascend the round tower with him, and when we leave it, we shall have a clearer idea of little Niels.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE ROUND TOWER.

EVERYBODY in Copenhagen knows the round tower, and provincialists know it, at least, by means of the Almanac, where it stands as a woodcut on the title-page. It is well known that King Christian the Fourth, to whose deathless fame Ewald and Hartmann have added the golden tribute of their muse, built the round tower as an observatory for Denmark's greatest celebrity, Tycho Brahé, who, during the same monarch's minority, had been obliged to leave his country.

Within this tower there is no ascent by steps, the top is reached by a broad, winding, stone passage, so smooth and gradual in its upward progress, that the Russian czar, Peter the Great, once drove up to the top in a carriage and four; when he reached it, he commanded one of his attendants to throw himself over; and the man would have done so, had he not been prevented by the Danish king.

"Would your people be so obedient?" asked the czar.

"I would not give such a command," replied the king. "But I know, in regard to my subjects—even the poorest among them—that I might lay my head on his lap, and sleep in safety."

Such is the story—and, if an invention, it is at least pleasing to us Danes. The porter's little son, who lived up there, believed it as a gospel truth; but, with his intimate knowledge of the place, he felt certain that the czar could not have driven all the way up to the balustrade, but must have got out of the carriage at the door of the room occupied by his father and himself, whence a staircase with many steps led to the highest point of the tower.

There are, perhaps, few places in Copenhagen that, in themselves, and in their associations and uses, draw so largely on the thoughts and the imagination as does the round tower—and more particularly must this be the case when one is born there, as Niels had been.

In the midst of the busy town, in the midst of its crowded narrow streets, the old tower lifts itself up, with its open arched windows, through which the wild winds sigh; and the snow, drifting during winter, forms into heaps on the slanting stony path. The tones of the organ, and the hymns which below peal over Wessel's and Ewald's graves, are heard as distinctly up yonder.

It is through the round tower that one gains the library of the University, which stretches over the vaulted roofs of the church like a large saloon, whose

book-shelves form, as it were, streets crossing each other. On the spot where the altar stands in the church beneath was then the old Scandinavian Museum; here were deposited funeral urns, weapons in ancient use, and other reminiscences of the past. This sounds like a note to "the Description of Copenhagen;" but in the recollection of him who was then called Little Niels—Poul of the round tower's son—it stands forth as the charming resort of his childhood; and on the ear of the man still rings the music loved in early days.

From the students' barracks in the old tower's neighbour—Regentsen—often arose, on starlight or moonlight evenings, the voice of song, and it came swelling up to the porter's domicile in the tower, where it was distinctly heard when the window was open. How often had little Niels not sat and listened to it with pleasure! Beneath him lay the whole town, somewhat indistinct, as if he beheld it in a dream. In the dark nights the street lamps shone like rows of torches seen through a fog—here and there a light glimmered from some garret window. He looked on all this also through his fancy's prismatic glass, and therein he was led to behold the town in olden and far different times, when it was first but a fishing village—then a commercial place—a "Kiöbmand's Haven"—a "Merchant's Haven"—and grew to be a royal city—for such he had read of it.

Many a stormy night he lay awake in his bed, and

listened to the mysterious murmurs of the wind through the arched loopholes of the old tower—it often seemed as if the wind were about to carry it away, and were fighting with the ancient walls. Well did the boy know the tempest's power, for he had often been exposed to it when going up with his father to their home at night. How often had not their light, cautiously as they guarded it, been extinguished by the blasts: how often had not both father and son been obliged to crouch down close to the wall, whilst the wind was roaring and howling above and below! To be sure, these were dreadful gales, they had to bow to them, and they thought that the tower did the same.

His childhood's days up yonder had been a sort of dream; when, in after-life, Niels saw a bee bury itself amidst the petals of a rose, especially of a rose belonging to an overgrown, shrunk-up looking bush, he could not help reverting in thought to his childhood up in the round tower. There, like the bee, he had enjoyed a sort of voluptuous existence; there he had felt and comprehended the same pleasure as the little damsel Marie we read of in Tieck's tale, who planted some seeds in the ground, and beheld them grow up into tall trees, from the top of which she could see all over the world. So he could see from the top of his tower over sea and land, and it was *his* magic tree.

The horrible had also found its representative in his childhood's home—and in no other than the



person once before named, the respectable Mother Börre, the old apple-woman, she who sat in the entrance to the tower, where she sold fruit, and, what children liked much better, sweet-stuffs ; she sat there summer and winter, but during the coldest weather she had a little brazier with her. Many a spoiled apple, or damaged sugar article, she had bestowed upon Niels ; but after he had passed his earliest infantine years, he had not eaten them. No ; he had thrown them away, and he would never shake hands with her. Moreover, he shuddered whenever she patted his head ; and why ? He had been told by his parents that during her lifetime she had sold her body, when she should die, to a surgeon at the hospital. It was so horrible, that while yet living, she should be sold when a corpse ! This was a sort of a bargain, if not exactly with the Evil One, at least with Death. For this agreement she received an annual pension of two dollars. One of these—it was paid back—had been borrowed by the porter's wife in an emergency ; Niels had to go out to change it, and he felt as if he were carrying blood-money.

All was clean and neat in the little room occupied by the porter and his family. During the morning Poul had plenty to do, and was always away, but in the evening he was generally at home with his wife and son, and it was his habit to read aloud to them—a favourite subject of his was the old history of Denmark, and sometimes the books had engravings, which

was a great help towards understanding them. He borrowed the books from the University library ; they knew very well there that he would take care of them.

The family's own wealth in books consisted only of two, the Bible, which belonged to his mother, and the old fairy tale book, "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments," which was owned by Niels, having been presented to him by his godfather, Herr Svane. These books were frequently read, and Niels was well versed in both, in the Bible and in the eastern tales, which, however different from each other to the child's young mind, both seemed fraught with truth.

An author, Humboldt we believe, says, "Dreams are thoughts, which, during our waking hours, we have not fully developed, and which now, in sleep, take the reins ; therefore people seldom dream of what most occupy their waking thoughts." Whether Niels ever had or had not an incipient wish to be Aladdin we cannot say, but most significant to him became in his riper years a dream of his childhood.

He had dreamed one night that, like Aladdin, he had descended into a cave where quantities of gold and silver and shining fruits almost blinded him, but he found and seized the wonderful lamp, and when he brought it home what should it be but his mother's old Bible !

Yes ! that dream had its significance in his after-life ! Children can dream what elder people after the struggle of a life manage—not indeed to seize,—but to catch a glimpse of.

That distant East, where the scene of the "Arabian Nights" was laid, and that land, where the Bible's sacred historians lived, were to him the same portion of this earth. Damascus and Jerusalem, Persia and Stony Arabia, were one and the same well-known country, as well known to him as his native Denmark, where he lived; these formed *his* world; he had indeed heard other lands and other kingdoms mentioned, but they were all strange to him, and seemed more distant than the sun or the moon, for he could see these above him. There had been a time also when he believed that the dark spots on the moon were a man, who had stolen cabbages, and had, therefore, been placed up there as a punishment, to be seen by all mankind! It was a dreadful punishment.

"No—it is not any thief of cabbages or of anything else," said Herr Svane. "It is a cunning little rogue, who flies about in the glass balloon; take care of him, for he skims the earth and laughs at us all."

These words and this explanation made a deep impression upon Niels, and he mentioned the subject to the student who was the assistant to the professor of astronomy.

It was dreadful credulity and ignorance on the part of one who lived so close to the observatory of Copenhagen! So he let the child look through one of the large telescopes up yonder, and the moon seemed like an enormous globe covered with the outlines of countries! He let him see the spots on the sun, which

seemed to him to extend and contract themselves; he also told him that the sun and the moon and each of the stars, was a large globe of itself. This was a new tale of wonder for little Niels; he did not quite comprehend it, to be sure, but it directed the flight of his fancy beyond the limits of this earth; he beheld in imagination every star peopled with human beings, and he thought if it could be possible for the people up there with their telescopes to see Copenhagen and the round tower where he lived.

Often and often did he now wish that he could fly like the swallows, that in their swift, arrow-like course, swept past his window in the tower, and, circling round and round, were soon out of sight; with such wings, he thought, one might reach even the stars. "It would take you, though, about two hundred years to get up yonder," the student had said; and these words were so fixed in his mind that he dreamed one night that, with the lightness and rapidity of a swallow, he had sprang from the earth, which became less and less, but the stars towards which he was flying became no larger. He was out long, long in empty space; at length he heard the student's voice—"It would take you about two hundred years to get up yonder." But, either he was determined or compelled to fly on; he rose higher and higher in the air, and more and more brilliantly sparkled the stars, but not nearer, and he awoke still flying, far, far from his destination.

His father had read to them from a translation, the

story of the lame imp who appeared to the student who resided so very high up, almost as high as the round tower, and at night lifted off the roofs of the houses, and let him see all that was going on within them. Fancy performed the same feat for Niels, though he saw nothing but well-spread tables, and guests partaking of roast meat and other nice dishes, and plenty of cakes, or else lively Christmas-eve parties, and handsome Christmas-trees, blazing with lights. He himself had a Christmas-tree every Christmas-eve, but it was a very tiny one. It stood in a small flower-pot, and was hung with uncracked nuts and real apples; at the top shone a gold star, which was meant to represent the star that guided the wise men to Bethlehem. But one Christmas Day, when dinner was over, and his father was going to read to them, his mother heaved a sigh, and, falling back, became as stiff as if she were dead. His father ran for the doctor; she was bled, and opened her eyes again, but from that hour she lost the use of her limbs: it was an attack of apoplexy. She had to be lifted into and out of bed; and in this helpless state she passed five long weary months.

When the Bible was read at night, her eyes showed that she understood it. Little Niels had heard it called "the Word of God," and in his childish faith he took up the holy volume one night and laid it on his mother's mouth, that she might kiss it. He never, even in after-life, forgot the bright intelligence that

shone in her eyes, then the soul's only channel of communication with the world around.

In May, at length, she died. This was his first great grief, the first break in the smooth tenour of his happy life; but his father still lived, and he had still his home; one-half of his world, however, was gone.

The mother's coffin was carried down to the foot of the tower; it was placed in a humble hearse, and the husband and son followed it a long way past the Nørre port to the churchyard. The sun was shining brightly, the trees were green in their young summer foliage, and in the waters they had crossed were reflected the blue skies above. Niels had never in his life been beyond the walls of Copenhagen; only as he had seen them from the tower did he know the suburbs, the fields, the meadows, and the woods; for the first time, this sweet, fresh May morning, had he trod upon the green turf, amidst flowers and trees—but this was near his mother's grave.

An anecdote is told of an English family, who, landing for a few hours at Copenhagen, from a steamer, on their voyage to St. Petersburg, took a carriage and desired the coachman "to drive them where something pretty was to be seen." And the finest sight which the driver knew of, was not the picture galleries or the museum—no, it was the "Assistance Churchyard;" he drove them out to it, and they were delighted with it, and declared that they

would come back to be buried there, for it was the most beautiful place in the world! Such, at least, was the driver's story, and Niels was of the same opinion as he and the English family were—surely it was the loveliest spot in the world! He wished that he and his father could remain there, and live under the spreading trees, in which little birds were singing,—there, where the walls were covered with sculpture, where the graves were adorned with monuments, flowers, and wreaths,—all was so solemn, and yet so charming! But he wept, because his father wept, as the dark, damp, heavy earth was shovelled in over his mother's coffin.

Slowly did they return to the old tower, where he was now all in all to his poor father. The presiding spirit of home had passed away, and thenceforth he seemed to be dearer than ever to his father, in whose heart he now occupied the deserted place; and he understood this. Less easy it is to understand—and yet it was so—that the child should so soon have forgotten his mother, her, whose whole heart beat for him, was filled with him—her, who loved him as only a mother can love, who forgot herself for him, and whose hopes for the future were all centred in him. But Niels got over his grief, and almost forgot his mother; and for the three following years the world had no dark shade for him, except one, that there were dogs in it.

A bold, spirited, excitable boy, with a will of his

own, Niels had but one weak side, and that was, an innate horror of dogs; he regretted any such animals had ever been created; if a dog but sniffed at him, he felt a sudden shuddering all over from the shock; therefore it may easily be imagined what a misery it must have been to him to perambulate the streets of Copenhagen, which are remarked by foreigners, and not without reason, to be so infested with swarms of dogs. Travellers have even asserted that we, in this respect, outdo Constantinople, so remarkable for its troops of wandering, unowned dogs. "They are not 'unowned' in Copenhagen," says Herr Svane; and we will give his description of the capital's canine propensities.

"Here, the dogs are not without owners, roaming about in hordes; every gentleman, every lady, every child, has his or her dog, every house its dog. But the worst part of the town for dogs is the harbour. How they bark and howl the blessed night on board the merchant ships and small craft! Lord have mercy on those who live in the streets near, for if they are not very heavy sleepers they can get no sleep at all! The dogs on shore answer them; there are duets, trios, whole choruses of barking; but the finale never arrives till night has ended and day has come, then another set begin. The fine ladies' little pets barking from the windows, house dogs from the doors, tradesmen's dogs, dogs of all kinds and degrees—where are not dogs to be found! There are dogs in chains and



dogs at large, dogs on sofas, dogs on beds, even dogs at table, where they sit, unperfumed with eau de Cologne, and receive kisses from pretty lips, and are treated as cherished members of the family. And this is by no means an exaggerated statement of dog life ! ”

So Herr Svane assures us. Little Niels was now to escape these plagues—but he was also to quit Copenhagen, and his home in the round tower. He cried : how did he know what might happen before, in after-years, when he should be taller, and bigger, and stronger, he might come back again ! His slender wardrobe was packed in a small wooden box, the only one he had. The old Bible and the “ Arabian Nights’ Entertainments ” were also deposited in it ; and thus prepared, he commenced his progress towards Jutland.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE MANSE ON THE HEATH—THE MUSICIAN GRETHE.

OVER Silkeborg, where *then* no one thought that a town would soon arise, passed the deep, heavy, sandy western road towards the clergyman's home—the old manse at Hvindingedalsbanker, which is separated by Lake Lange from the neighbouring forests, and bounded by a wide rambling heath. It was late in the evening—dark and gloomy—the travellers were weary, and so were the horses, they jogged on slowly amidst profound stillness. At length the bay-ing of a dog was heard.

"That is our watch-dog," said the Rev. Mr. Mollerup; "sounds are heard at a great distance here."

The dog's welcome was the first in that new home. What did he see around him? For two hours' past nothing was visible on account of the darkness. A carriage had been sent to Aarhus on the preceding evening, that the horses might be fresh for their return journey—but they seemed jaded for all that—

the sand became deeper—the night darker. They heard at a distance the rushing of the water through the locks at Gudenaä; then the scream of some bird surprised Niels, but he soon became accustomed to these strange sounds, and his wearied eyes gradually closed in sleep.

They had arrived at their destination before he awoke. Everything was in commotion, everybody moving about. The lights themselves seemed to be flitting here and there in the house, and proclaiming, "Here they are! here they are!" The watch-dog barked, the cocks and hens in the poultry-yard crowed and cackled; the servant girl's wooden shoes clattered upon the stones of the courtyard, and her mistress stood with a smiling countenance and a ready kiss; close beside her stood a girl, apparently not very young, with a mild, thoughtful expression of face—she looked about eight-and-twenty years of age, and was the good clergyman's only child, Bodil. The whole house seemed to be illuminated, and a nice repast was set out in the parlour—a warm supper of roasted hare and beans.

The minister's wife had much to tell, much more than the minister himself, who had come from such a distance; the marten had taken five ducklings; one of the pictures had fallen down the day before and terrified her—she fancied it was a bad omen; the new judge and his wife had arrived in the country, and had already paid them a visit. A great deal had

happened during the fortnight Japetus Mollerup had been absent in Copenhagen.

Bodil meanwhile took care of Niels: kindly and cordially did she bid him welcome; her mother—a very pious, worthy woman—also welcomed him kindly, but she could not conceal from herself that she would rather have received a more sinful, ill-behaved boy, whom she might have converted from the error of his ways, have led to virtue's paths—have brought up to be a pride and pleasure to her in this world, and for whose rescue from wickedness she might have hoped for a reward in heaven; with heartfelt joy would she have received such an inmate. How vain often are the good intentions of human beings!

Bodil took Niels up to his little room after he had been repeatedly charged by her mother not to forget to extinguish the candle—but Bodil herself returned to see that this had been done. He had said his prayers, and was lying comfortably in his soft bed, with its nice white sheets; but though he was very tired, he could not fall asleep immediately.

Twenty-four hours only had elapsed since he had left Copenhagen, and his old home—the round tower. In that short space of time he had seen infinitely more than in all his previous years; he had been in a steam-boat, in charming weather, and his ship, without sails, had passed hundreds of vessels with every sail set, but which in vain tried to overtake it. He had seen the whole coast of Zealand—Elsinore and Kronborg, nay

he had even been so near to Sweden that he could discern the people on shore, and could perceive whether they were on foot or on horseback. He had landed in Jutland, in a town quite strange to him ; and from thence had travelled a long way over great hills, from which one could see far on all sides. He had passed sand-banks, so high, that he thought they were hills also ; had driven through woods, and out again on the open plains—and all the way in silence. At the inns where they had stopped, everything had been strange to him, even the language which was spoken—and now this country—this spot of which he knew nothing, and where every one were strangers to him—was to be his future home ! These reflections took complete possession of his mind, and kept him awake.

Through the window a bright star was shining in upon him ; he recognised *it*, for how often up yonder in the far away tower, had he not at night seen that beautiful star, exactly in the same place in the heavens ! *It* then had followed him here—he felt as happy as if he had met an old friend, repeated his evening prayers once more, and calmly fell asleep.

The next morning when he was called to breakfast, he was surprised to hear music—and the sounds were those of a *shaum* or a harmonica. It was the latter instrument. An old peasant woman, who was sitting in the parlour, was playing on it, with much expression, the air of an ancient Scandinavian ballad ; the musician had very large blue eyes.

The clergyman was sitting in his great easy chair, and as the last note died away, he exclaimed,—

“Thank you, Grethe! thank you for this welcome—I know how well you wish me.”

“Yes!” said she—“I heard that you were expected home last night, and I sat up till long after my usual hour of going to rest, to welcome you back from the King’s Copenhagen—from that long, long journey! I stood for hours at my door looking out for you, but at last it became so late that I crept into my bed—and therefore I am come this morning;” so saying, she kissed the minister’s hand.

She was *the musician Grethe*, for such was the name by which she went, and she lived in a kind of turf-house; she had come there with all that she possessed, and this was a treasure, from which she was not without deriving profit. Many years before this harmonica had been given to her, and by dint of perseverance, she had learned to play on it, without knowing a note. Every old melody she could hum—every new song she heard, she could manage to play on her instrument by the unassisted aid of her musical ear. It became quite a source of gain to her, when she played for dancing at the weddings of the peasantry. She loved her harmonica as if it had been a living creature, and delighted in its tones. Music was the passion of her life. She was always rejoiced to go to the Manse, though it was a long way off, for the ladies there had a pianoforte, and the minister’s wife played extremely

well. Old Grethe had often lingered near the house, listening to the "Sacred Music;" and occasionally she had been called in, for she and Mrs. Mollerup sympathized in their love of music. Had Grethe been born in another sphere of life, she would, perhaps, have become, with her musical genius, a European celebrity; as it was, she was only "the musician Grethe."

She was little Niels' first acquaintance in his new home; he was soon, however, introduced to others—to boys and girls, and to the poultry, and the horses and cows; in short, to the whole colony. All new and amusing—a complete contrast to what he had been accustomed to in the round tower and in Copenhagen. To be sure there was a dog here at the Manse too, but he was chained up; and though he barked, he knew everybody that belonged to the house. The swine grunted, the ducks quacked, the pigeons and the sparrows went peacefully about, the girls sang, and the boys whistled; but little Niels found it very difficult to understand them when they spoke. He thought their Danish was very unlike Copenhagen Danish.

It was a truly Christian family which Niels had entered. They were all good people, right-minded and kind-hearted; only there was too much tobacco-smoke in the house, but that was the worthy pastor's fault, and it was overlooked on account of the pleasure he had in smoking. His wife and daughter, indeed, had become accustomed to it.

He had been absent full fourteen days, and not a pipe had been lighted in the house all that time, yet the perfume remained stationary—so the perfume always remains in Russian leather; so one peculiar scent is always found in English books; and the smell of wood-shavings always lingers about the working-clothes of the joiner.

Old Japetus Mollerup's heart was full of love—that love which was the doctrine of Christ. His preaching in church was influenced by the same feelings, but they showed themselves in a different form—as in the pictures which the old masters of the middle ages have bequeathed to posterity. It is not the awful sight of the dripping blood, and all these horrors, which strike us and awaken our sensibilities, but the pious, holy feelings, the firm adherence to the faith, which attract us. Thus it was not so much the words of the preacher, which sometimes dwelt on the despair of the lost in eternity—on the judgments of an offended God, and the abomination of sin—but rather the earnestness with which he spoke—the apparent sincerity of his convictions, which impressed his hearers. Between the minister and his flock, there seemed to be quite a patriarchal connection; the old man's words were accepted as truth itself among them; and the more intimately he was known, the more he was revered. She, who was his nearest in this world—his excellent wife—looked up to him as to a superior being; his sentiments were her guide, his opinions her



law. That such a man had not been raised to be a dean was, to her, the strongest proof of the iniquity of this world. The wondrous grandeur of the day of judgment, and the misery of hell fire, often occupied her thoughts, and then stood forth her sinful human nature; for she could not refrain from wondering if this or that person of her acquaintance would not be condemned to be burned, if not to all eternity, at least for a time; and it was one of her most earnest wishes that the Almighty would permit the end of the world to take place during her lifetime, that she might be sure of seeing Doomsday, and knowing how it fared with these people. She wished to be certain that she had not judged them wrongfully.

The youngest of the amiable trio at the Manse was the daughter Bodil—called after no high-born dame of the middle ages, but after a worthy aunt, who was dead. Few were as amiable and rightminded as she was. She was as remarkable for good sense, in regard to temporal affairs, as she was for her faith in the vast spirit world. That which was so beautiful in the old days, namely, that the retainers formed almost a part of the family, was still observable at the Manse; even the domestic animals seemed to partake of this pleasing harmony. The watch-dog's very growl seemed friendly as Niels, at a respectful distance, followed Bodil, when she carried him his food; the fowls fluttered their feathers on her approach, the ducks were not afraid to steal from the great dog's trough,

and the pigeons hopped about among the swine, who lay indolently enjoying the sunshine.

Hvindingedalsbanker, indeed the whole of the district of Silkeborg, could then be looked upon only as a desert, almost beyond the confines of the civilized world ; at that time no one ever dreamed of seeing a town arise near Lake Lange. There was no appearance of it then, though a manufactory was talked of. But it was not until seven years after Niels' arrival there that one was established. All traffic and money transactions were at that time only carried on by barter ; there was no money afloat in these primitive parts, with the exception of one single five rix bank dollar note, and who was the owner of this note was always the question—it was known to the whole of the inhabitants of the place. This is a fact !

The first day in his new home was—and very properly so—a day of rest for Niels ; after that, occupation was to be found for him—he was not to be allowed to be indolent ; for idleness is the root of all evil.

In the evening the minister laid aside his pipe, which had not been out of his mouth the whole day, except at meals, and he went, as for years he had been accustomed to do, to take a stroll across the field towards the heath ; Niels went with him, he had not yet left the precincts of the Manse.

The ground they passed over was arid and red like, it was covered with mole-hills, and a few small red

and yellow flowers grew around. They ascended the nearest hillock, and behold, stretching far before them, the vast heath, which, with its blooming heather, shining in the setting sun, looked like a purple sea, its surface swelling and falling in long undulating lines. Towards the north-west lay the woods and lakes of Silkeborg; morasses with their dark storks, woods where dwell the eagle and the horned owl; Himmelbjerg raised against the sky its bold, brownish summit, and all was still, and yet so full of sound! One was sensible of the buzzing of the flies—the gushing of the distant springs—and blending with these came the tones, as they seemed, of an Æolian harp. They were from a harmonica. The musician Grethe was playing on it. Close under the bank, to the north-west, her little cottage was situated; it was built of turf, and thatched with heather, which, in its proximity to the mould, bore moss, little green herbs, houseleeks—nay, even a wild rose bush. The musician Grethe was standing at her own half-open door, and the sun tinged her withered cheeks with red. She was playing apparently for her own amusement, but it was for dancing; for before her a strange-looking figure was exerting itself in performing some very elaborate springing steps. Those who have read the story of Peter Schlemihl's sold shadow which wandered about the world, might have taken it for granted, on seeing this apparition, that they actually beheld it; a real human creature it could not possibly be, so thin

and slender was this similitude to a living being. A large blue painted box, with red characters on it, and a leather strap, to assist in carrying it, stood before him, as if it had been the prompter's box, which had been forgotten to be removed before the ballet commenced.

"It is the tailor, I declare!" cried the pastor, stopping, and looking with suppressed laughter at the performer's agility, without either the dancer or Grethe being aware that they had any spectators. The dancer ended his springs with a sort of yell, and then Japetus Mollerup clapped his hands, and cried "Laudabilis! one may truly call you a master of the dance."

It was "the mender of old clothes," "the ghost of a bodkin," as sundry witty individuals, in derision of his thinness, called him. Ridicule increases, like shadows, the further one goes north; amongst the Greenlanders it becomes more prominent—and is the last appeal, or most important arm of the law in cases of dispute—as much in vogue as duelling in civilised countries. "The mender of old clothes" went from farm to farm, and house to house, to the proprietors and the peasants, remained in each for days or weeks, and repaired everybody's clothes, sewing, patching, turning. He was a living *Budstikke*,\* but with a

\* *Budstikke*: a sort of wooden messenger, a piece of wood shaped like a halberd, which in ancient days was sent round from district to district in Norway and Sweden to convene the inhabitants in any case of necessity. The *budstikke* is frequently mentioned in Danish poetry.

degree of diplomatic shrewdness, arising, perhaps, from good-nature, perhaps from prudence ; he knew how to relate everything, without injuring any one—to be lively and amusing, without the slightest sting. And if ever his anecdotes were to the disadvantage of any one, he always added, “This is the report, but very likely there is no truth in it.”

He took up the box which contained his wardrobe, strapped it over his shoulders, and, chatting by the way, accompanied the clergyman home to the Manse, where he was going to stay for a couple of weeks to do some work. That he was very welcome was to be perceived on every countenance ; there was almost as much joy as yesterday, when the good pastor had returned from Copenhagen ; for the travelling tailor was in the habit of bringing them news, and was also, as it was called, “a good reader.” He possessed one great advantage, that he always had with him a copy of the “Aarhuus Journal ;” and though he did not receive this newspaper direct by post, for it was generally about a fortnight old, and had been conned over by at least six families in the neighbourhood, still he got one every other Sunday, and in this was published the affairs of the whole world—“both home and foreign intelligence”—and he not only read this aloud, but was able to explain what was obscure in it ; he had, in fact, more talent than flesh. His acquaintance was of some consequence to Niels, as we shall find hereafter.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE MENDER OF OLD CLOTHES.

It had been said in jest, of Niels, that he was of *high birth*, because he was born up in the round tower. Nobody spoke of his high birth in his present abode; but the travelling tailor's birth was a matter of celebrity. He had inherited a historical family name from the olden times—the traditionary times. The tailor was a grandson of Peer “the gold-digger.”

Many an evening, after supper, Niels sat and heard from the tailor's own mouth about his forefathers, and about the rich treasure in the deep quicksand. The torch of superstition then cast its figurative light over the dreary heath, and he who was the narrator became an important historical personage in the boy's eyes.

At Stougaard, near Veile, lived Peer Holstener, his grandfather—thus commenced the tale: plenty of land for cows and horses had he; but one night he dreamed about some great buried treasure, and that if he wished to know where it was to be found, he must take a journey to Boel, where at the inn, and in the

same chamber in which he had once slept, lay upon the shelf a book, in which all the particulars were distinctly noted down. He went there, found the book, and in it saw described the treasure that a nobleman in Silkeborg had caused to be buried. A line was to be drawn from Gjöd vad Church to Linaa, and there, ten fathoms above the level of the sea, at Gudenaa, lay the treasure. The place might be recognised by a great oak, thirty ells in height, but so entirely concealed by the quicksand, that no more of the top of the tree was visible than about the end of a pipe.

Peer sold his property for ten thousand rix dollars, and removed to Silkeborg, where he obtained permission to dig; he found several things, such as old copper coins, a horse-shoe, and the like, but the treasure he did not reach. "The quicksand had swallowed it," an old woman told him. All his money was spent, and at last he had nothing more to live on. The hole that he dug was always filled up with the loose sand; and every night a black dog ran over it—that dog was the devil. Peer, the gold-digger, became a pauper, and died in the poor-house at Linaa.

The tailor declared he could answer for the truth of the story; he had heard it from his own father, and he himself, when passing by night, with his chest of clothes on his back, the place where the treasure had been swallowed up, and which had been the ruin of his grandfather, had seen a light dancing over it: no quantity of sand-drifts could extinguish this light; the

Evil One kept it gleaming there, to point out the spot, and to entice human beings to dig for the gold, and bury themselves with it.

Many were the tales from the worlds of imagination and reality which the "mender of old clothes" could relate ; he was a traveller, and had free ingress to the houses of the gentry and the clergy, as well as of the peasantry. He, and his newspaper with the foreign and domestic intelligence, were always welcome—his constant good humour and lively manners were very attractive—so he and Niels soon became good friends.

For more than a fortnight they had been together ; it was a Sunday, the last day of the tailor's stay at the Manse—he was going to do some work at the house of the new judge of the district—who, with his wife, were a young and lately-married couple. The musician Grethe's second cousin, little Karen, was in their establishment as an under-servant, and this was pretty much all he knew of them. The whole family at the Manse had gone that day to take the sacrament, with the exception of the cook, the tailor, and Niels, who had remained at home.

The two latter amused themselves by watching the gambols of some kittens, the offspring of a favourite cat : they were not doomed to be drowned, but were to be given away, all but one, which had been selected by Niels ; he was the funniest among them, and was tumbling about and playing with a large brass button



which the tailor had thrown to him ; he seemed never to tire of his toy, but after a time the tailor and Niels became tired of looking at him, and they fell into conversation about animals kindred to cats ; the tiger, for instance, who inhabits other portions of the world. The clergyman's brother had been to these distant places, and he had died abroad of some contagious disease ; his portrait hung in the drawing-room, he was attired in a coat trimmed with gold lace—a large shirt frill, and deep ruffles at the wrist : it was the grandest picture in the room.

The room-door was locked, but they opened it and went in, and the tailor was very chatty, amusing, as well as instructive ; suddenly—his eye fell by chance on a casket and other things standing on a chair—a shock seemed to pass through him as if his glance had encountered a snake ; he seized Niels by the arm, and crying,—

“Now we have seen it, and we must not remain here—come !” he pulled Niels hurriedly out of the room with him, but did not shut the door behind him.

He continued to speak on a variety of subjects to Niels—perhaps for a quarter of an hour, and then left him suddenly, whereupon Niels went alone again to the drawing-room to look at the portrait.

About an hour afterwards the rest of the family and household returned from church. Mrs. Mollerup went straight to the drawing-room, and on leaving it she

inquired if any one had been in there—"Yes, Niels and the tailor," was the reply.

Before the good lady had gone to church, she, who averred she never *did* forget anything in general, had forgotten, what she ought especially to have remembered, her little green purse, and an old-fashioned silver-gilt vinaigrette, an heir-loom, bequeathed to her by Aunt Bodil; it was a valuable article, with figures and flowers engraved on it, although it was not larger than a walnut. These two articles, and a clove-pink she had plucked in the garden, she perfectly well remembered having laid on the chair, when she took out of the casket her best gloves and a clean collar. The purse, with every shilling in it, lay on the chair still—the flower had been flung on the ground, but the silver-gilt vinaigrette was not to be found! It had lain there along with the other things—now it was gone! No stranger had entered the Manse—not even a dog had barked!

"It lay there," said the tailor; who at once confessed having been in the drawing-room with Niels. "I do not deny it."

Niels had seen nothing but the pictures.

"When I saw what was lying there, I left the room instantly," said the tailor, turning very pale.

"Lord help us! no one dreams of suspecting you!" cried the minister's wife. "You would not do such a thing. Don't we know you very well? Pray don't distress yourself in the least." She smiled kindly to

him, and patted him in a friendly way on the shoulder. At that very moment an idea seemed to flash across her mind—she looked hard at Niels, but without saying a word.

The tailor was acknowledged to be the most scrupulously honest creature breathing; he carried his honesty to such a pitch that it almost became laughable,—it might, indeed, have been considered to verge upon a weakness.

It is related, and in the newspapers the paragraph was headed with “Honesty carried too far,” that a respectable old book-keeper, at a counting-house in London, dreamed one night that he had made a mistake in some account; he took this so much to heart, that the whole of the following day he was observed to be in a very gloomy mood, and the following night he committed suicide, only for an imaginary mistake—the vagary of a dream!

Such conduct would generally be attributed to insanity; but there really do exist individuals whose consciences, in some one respect or other, are so morbidly tenacious, that they cannot endure that even in a dream, a shadow should be cast upon their integrity;—with such a distempered state of feeling the poor tailor was gifted or encumbered, and this was well known among all the families for whom he usually worked. His exactitude was so precise, that he absolutely thought it necessary to account for every inch of thread, every little scrap that was either consumed or

left over,—and there were a few who, judging according to the harsh ideas of the world, were not disinclined to think that there might be something of falseness concealed under all this fastidiousness. But they did him great injustice. It was also a remarkable fact, that he always evinced much disquiet when, in any place where he was a stranger, he saw money lying about: he always started back, and rushed from the spot—so that once or twice he had been asked if he had felt an inward desire to possess himself of what he saw, and had made his escape to avoid the temptation. Such words always had a deep effect on him—they made him ill—and for days he would remain silent and dejected. Such was his nature—quite a psychological curiosity!

Respecting the worthy tailor, then, there could not be a shade of suspicion; but the mistress of the family had taken an idea into her head—suggested by her belief in the great prevalence of sin in Copenhagen—she pondered on all the wickedness there,—yes, she had too surely obtained what she once wished for—a bad boy had entered her family—a child whose habits were evil. Suddenly she seized Niels by the hand—took him into her own chamber, and in an austere tone of voice demanded, as she looked full into his eyes,—

“Where have you hidden it? Why did you take it? You have got it, I know.”

“No—no!” he exclaimed, earnestly, the colour fading from his cheeks.

She grasped his hand tightly—he trembled—upon which she felt assured that she guessed aright, and added harshly,—

“Don’t you know that such actions will bring you to the house of correction ?”

“I never took it—I never saw it,” he almost shrieked, with a degree of impetuosity which no one had ever before remarked in him. That vehemence of temper showed itself to which his godfather, Herr Svane, had slightly alluded when he said,—

“He has a touch of the devil in him.”

“Kill me !” cried the boy, as he wrenched himself from her grasp, rushed out of the door and out of the house, and ran without stopping over the fields to the heath—where he threw himself down among the tall heather—tore it up by the roots with his hands, kicked it with his feet, writhed in passionate excitement, and at length lay quiet from exhaustion.

Half an hour had perhaps elapsed when, somewhat calmed, he raised his head, and, glancing upwards, perceived standing near him a strange-looking woman, with a red handkerchief tied over her bronzed cheeks, and dark eyes that glittered like those of a bird: she carried a heavy bundle on her back, and upon that hung an infant, either sewed in, or wrapt up in, a skin—she was leaning upon a knotted stick—and said not a word. She was a gipsy—one of the *Kjæltring* race, as they are called in Jutland. She stood quietly, but earnestly looking at him.

"Kingio!" she exclaimed; "tired—faint," that word signified, and had it been overheard by any one who understood her language, he would instantly have said that she did not belong to the peculiar Jutland Kjeltring folks, but to the legitimate gipsy race—her countenance and the expression of her eyes also showed this. She looked at him for another moment, and then turning away walked slowly towards the Manse.

Her figure, her whole appearance, for a moment diverted Niels' mind from his own bitter thoughts, but they soon returned with overwhelming force; he laid himself down again; remembrance rushed upon him like the billows of the advancing tide; he thought of his life at the clergyman's house and the people there; he recollected his home at Copenhagen, his friends at Regentsen, and lastly, his departed parents. How deeply, how powerfully cannot a child's heart feel! How sad when his sorrow is hopeless! He was positively certain that he had never beheld the lost vinaigrette, much less taken it, and yet she who had promised to be his mother had accused him so cruelly! Never would he return to the Manse—that was his firm determination, but our Lord had willed it otherwise.

Bodil had speedily disabused her mother of the idea that Niels could have taken the vinaigrette; and they had both been looking for him everywhere. The gipsy woman, at length, brought information as

to where he was, and Bodil set off alone to find him.

"You are a good, innocent boy!" she said, as she held out her hand kindly to him. "I believe you entirely, and my mother believes you too—I have set all to rights with her. What is gone is gone! but perhaps it may be found by-and-by. Come, let us go home together. You will stay with me—for I am now your sister; I have vowed to be so in my heart to your father and mother, who are up yonder with our Lord, but who have not forsaken you. Still think of them, for they do not forget you, and they watch with pleasure over every good action of yours—if only for their sakes, you must not give way to passion and impetuosity; I know that you are, and will be, good, and worthy of affection," and she kissed his brow.

The tears then began to flow in torrents from his eyes—he pressed her hand between both of his.

"I did not see what is lost, I never took it!" he sobbed.

"I believe you firmly, and mother believes you; we will say nothing more about it."

And nothing more *was* said about it; the mother seemed to be kinder to him, the father, who had answered for the boy, never alluded to the subject; but from that day Bodil had acquired a strong hold over her adopted brother's heart.

The next morning the tailor took his departure; his mind was not at ease, he was out of spirits; if we

may use the expression, he seemed to have a screw loose. A fortnight quickly passed away ; Niels learned his lessons, and read a great deal—he appeared to take the greatest pleasure in reading ; history and geography became his principal amusements. Bodil was the first to remark his great application, and to perceive how well he understood what he read. She was also surprised at making another discovery, which we must now relate.

All the kittens before mentioned had been given away, with the exception of the one which had played with the tailor's brass button, and which now often amused itself in playing with potatoes. One day Bodil found this kitten up in the drawing-room, playing with one of the round tassels of the sofa which had been dragged off, and which it was rolling about : it rolled presently into a mouse-hole in the wainscot of the wall ; Bodil pulled it out, but her notice having been attracted to the spot, she perceived two or three more mouse-holes in the corner, and in one of these she saw something shining—it was the missing vinaigrette ! Most probably the kitten had by some chance found its way into the drawing-room on that memorable Sunday when the vinaigrette was supposed to have been stolen, had jumped upon the chair, knocked the shining toy off of it, and rolled it, in its play, into the mouse-hole. The cat had given evidence against itself, and thus cleared up the mystery. Mrs. Mollerup at once saw the truth, and seizing both the



vinaigrette and the kitten, the good woman rushed into the room where Niels was sitting absorbed in his books. Her face radiant with joy, she cried,—

“It is found ! Here is the thief who rolled it into a hole ;” and, laughing heartily, she threw the cat into Niels’ lap.

His face flushed crimson in a moment, and he grasped the kitten fiercely.

“It was his fault then ?” he exclaimed, “he shall suffer for it !” and in a sudden fit of ungovernable passion, the angry boy cast the poor animal with all his might against the stove ; the creature gave a faint cry, and fell with its head bleeding upon the floor. The minister’s wife shrieked loudly, as her eyes wandered in horror from the boy to the cat.

“Good Lord ! what have you done ?”

“What *has* he done ?” asked Bodil, who had hurried into the room, alarmed by her mother’s scream. “Could *you* do this ?” she said to Niels, sorrowfully.

The boy then heaved a deep convulsive sigh, and throwing himself on the ground, close to his chair, he hid his face in his hands, terrified at his own deed.

For the first time Japetus Mollerup spoke sternly and severely to him—he pointed out to him the consequences of such sinful feelings—of an evil nature, which must be struggled against and conquered. He told the boy that the poor animal was no way to blame, even if its play had occasioned trouble and distress to various human beings. To what would not such violence lead ?

To manslaughter—nay, to murder—to crimes that not the most heartfelt sorrow and repentance could do away with or atone for in this world.

The poor kitten was so much hurt, that it was necessary to put an end to its sufferings and its life, and it was forthwith drowned. Niels looked at the red spots of blood on the floor, he looked at Bodil's tearful eyes, and his heart smote him as if he had committed the crime of Cain. His sorrow, his repentance were so great and so sincere, that they had the good effect of checking, in his yet childish years, the growth of the evil root, which else might have increased rapidly. Repentance acted as a crack in a steam-boiler—it permitted the steam to escape, and greater mischief to be thus averted.

"The poor tailor!" exclaimed Bodil, "I think I shall write and tell him that the vinaigrette has been found; I know how he will worry himself about that affair. He will be positively ill—I am convinced it is never out of his thoughts—and he will be fancying all sorts of things."

She then told what she had heard from himself, that the year before he had received two new silver dollars at the Manse, and was quite pleased with their brightness, and nice clean look, but they became a source of great anxiety and annoyance to him. The shopkeeper, in the market town, where he went to purchase some things he required, said to him, in jest perhaps, "These dollars look as if they were just coined."

The man, probably, meant nothing, but the susceptible tailor immediately took into his head that the shopkeeper intended to insinuate that he had made them, or that he was connected with a gang of coiners ! He was shocked, and instantly informed the man where he had got the dollars. But on his way home, and for some days after, he was pursued by the thought, "What if they really were false dollars !" And he fancied himself arrested and brought before a magistrate on the charge.

We smile at all this, and cannot believe it ; and yet there *are* in this world people of such strange morbid feelings. Bodil was about to write to the poor tailor, when, on the very day that she had proposed doing so, there arrived from the new judge a letter to the clergyman, inquiring if the tailor were perfectly honest, and if nothing had been missed at the Manse.

The reason of this inquiry was, that some money had been taken away at the judge's house : every one of the servants had been able to clear themselves from suspicion ; and in their boxes, which had been searched, nothing had been found. The tailor had during these proceedings evinced much anxiety and dismay, and when at length his chest of clothes was looked into, no money indeed was found there ; but hid away in a stocking was a valuable ring that was known to belong to a stranger—one of the gentlemen who were on a visit there from Copenhagen. The tailor, like other thieves, had strongly asserted his

innocence ; but when they accused him in earnest, he became suddenly silent, and would not utter a word. He was now confined to bed, either with real or pretended illness. Such were the contents of the letter.

They were all very much shocked at the Manse, but they felt quite certain that the tailor had not been guilty of theft. Japetus Mollerup wrote an excellent character of him, and assured the judge that similar testimony in his favour could be obtained from every place where the unfortunate, but most worthy, man had been employed. He also described his peculiar disposition, and his extreme tenderness on the score of character, and declared that his illness could not be assumed.

But how had it all happened then ?

The ring was undoubtedly found in a stocking near the top of the tailor's locked clothes' chest ; he had himself been recently seen to go to it. Where did the stolen ring come from ? Who had placed it there ? Well—no explanation could be obtained at the time—so it often happens in this world—it must be waited for—but it will come !

The slightest doubt of his integrity had a mysterious power over the poor tailor, and always brought on a fever accompanied by temporary fits of delirium ; and though his senses told him, "You are innocent," imaginary terrors took possession of him. In vain he repeated to himself, "I am innocent ; if I stood before

my Almighty Judge, I could, with a clear conscience, say—never have I knowingly or willingly injured any one !”

Memory recapitulated every action of his life ; not the slightest intention even escaped in this review of the past ; and he could not accuse himself of anything which could derogate from his character as an honest man. The police court was looked on by him as a fearful state machine, that seized whoever might come within its grasp, and would tear off a limb, or destroy the entire man. Justice was a hard-hearted dame, quite devoid of compassion, and caring for nothing but law.

It may be supposed that when, at the judge’s house, a valuable ring belonging to a guest was found in the tailor’s box, he was immediately set down also as the thief of the money which was missing : he knew this, and it had a terrible effect upon him. He said not a word ; he seemed as if he had been stunned by a sudden fall from a great height ; he felt as if the wind were whirling through his head ; the blood pressing on his heart and his brain. His senses had fled !

## CHAPTER V.

## A VISIT TO THE MUSICIAN GRETHE—NIELS IS TO BECOME A STUDENT.

It was only two months since Niels had left Copenhagen, and already how much had not happened where he now lived !

Bodil had undertaken to direct his reading, and to instruct him in history and geography. The clergyman himself took charge of his religious education, and taught him to write Danish correctly. At first there were many grammatical faults in his exercises, but nevertheless there were fancy and spirit in his compositions.

Bodil had a peculiar talent for arranging flowers and plants, so that these should present to the eye a beautiful group : decaying leaves with their pale tints were contrasted to fresh grass and weeds, and all the varied shapes and colours formed a charming picture. Even old Japetus was delighted when he looked at his daughter's handiwork, and used to exclaim,—

“ Yes, God is great, even in these humble productions ! ”

Niels was not without admiration for these pretty devices, but saw in them a higher talent. He learned much from Bodil: little did he then think how much, in the course of a few years, he should teach her about botany—and natural history—about oxygen and nitrogen—carbonic acid—steam—and all such scientific matters. But now Bodil was his teacher.

One morning she found him on the outside of the garden amusing himself by sticking a pin into an ant-hill, and watching the bustle and confusion his doing so caused among the ants, who hurried away, dragging their eggs with them.

"You have chosen a very naughty amusement," said Bodil. "Don't you see the harm you are doing? Their whole town, their houses, and their homes you are destroying for these sensible, hardworking little creatures."

She then told him what she knew of their sagacity, and added, "Even in the Bible it is said—'*Go to the ant; consider her ways, and be wise!*'"

Niels instantly gave up his mischievous play, and with what interest, from that hour, he looked at every little ant-hill in the fields!

Bodil was on her way with some warm soup for the sick musician Grethe, who was confined to bed in her lonely cottage. Niels accompanied her. It was in the middle of the day, and the sunshine was quite oppressive. They had reached the slope of the rising ground beneath which the heath stretched itself far

out, when a wonderful view presented itself to their eyes. It was no longer the old, well-known moor, but a paradise such as Niels had never beheld, that lay before them! An extensive lake, with lovely woody islets, reflected in the placid water; and high towers, with flowering shrubs on the parapets, which looked like hanging gardens. His eyes sparkled at beholding all this beauty; but it immediately occurred to him that it must be witchcraft—a phantom scene, created by some magician's art. He had heard from the tailor that the whole of the surrounding country was filled with terrible sorcerers, who had raised on shining pillars, the old heath-covered tumuli; he knew also the story of Taunhäuser, who was taken by the Lady Venus into a hill where everything was wonderfully magnificent, but it was altogether the work of the Evil One. Involuntarily he clasped his hands.

"How very beautiful!" exclaimed Bodil. "Wonderful are thy works, O God!"

"Is it not witchcraft?" asked Niels. "In reality it is only the heath. There are no trees and towers, no such lake in reality?"

"It is a natural appearance," said Bodil, "I can give you no explanation of it, though it is something like the rainbow, that shows itself, but not so frequently, nor so high up as it. It comes from God. The Evil One has no hand in it."

It was the Fata Morgana they saw, which on very warm, sunny days shows itself on the heaths of Jut-



land, as in deserts. Water, islands, trees and castles, all appear distinctly in outline, even to the most minute details.

It was the first time Niels had pondered over "*To be, or not to be ?*" and Bodil's explanation was very satisfactory to him.

At length they reached the humble dwelling of the musician Grethe ; all was neat and clean in the low but not airless room ; the old woman was lying on a turn-up bed, the harmonica was on a chair close by her, just as other invalids might have had near their couch a favourite flower, or a favourite book, from the roof and round the walls hung wreaths of heather and sweetbriar. The harmonica was her dear companion, the child of her soul ; with it she was never alone, she said. She was better to-day, and able to enjoy the nice food brought to her from the Manse.

Bodil told her of the tribulation into which the poor tailor had been thrown, and that he had become deranged.

"Poor man !" said Grethe. "Ah, well ! I always thought that it would come to this at last. Never did he deprive his neighbour of an atom that belonged to him ; no, not so much as would lie upon a finger-nail. He was always horrified if a theft were committed within miles of him—this seemed to be a peculiarity which had grown with him from his birth. But I can explain this. I was his mother's fellow servant ; some money was missing one day when she was out in the

fields. Every place was searched, but the money could not be found. When she came in, and was just about to go up-stairs, she saw on one of the steps a small roll of paper—it was the bank notes for which they had been looking! She knew nothing about the loss, and taking them up, she was smoothing them out, when her master, a Kammerraad, happened to come up, and observed what she had in her hand. He snatched the bank notes from her, and spoke so roughly to her that she trembled violently, and could scarcely stand. But there was nothing more said about it; she had a clear conscience, and the noble family were in time convinced of her innocence. The fright, however, she had experienced had a strong effect on her, for her infant was born eight weeks before his time, and he was such a miserable-looking thin little creature! He had to be taken the greatest care of, it was a wonder that he lived; but he did not grow up to have flesh on his bones like other men, he was always like a mere shadow, or a scarecrow, and the fright his mother had before he was born had the peculiar effect upon him, to make him ill at the slightest similar shock.

Such was Grethe's explanation of the poor tailor's idiosyncrasy.

"Well, I think of a great many things," said she; "I am old—I remember much—and I put this thing and that thing together."

"You have an excellent memory indeed," said Bodil; "and what delights me most is the number

of pretty songs you remember; I have seen very few of them among printed music."

"I learned these in the days of my childhood," replied Grethe: "at that time several people knew them, now I alone retain them, and even I begin to forget them: sometimes there is a whole verse I cannot call to mind; but when I play the airs the words come back to me. That instrument is a great help to me," added she, pointing to the harmonica; "if I only play a few chords on it, all my old musical recollections become clear to me, and I can recall the verses too."

"There is one about a king's son and a princess," said Bodil; "next time you come to the Manse, you must sing it for me, that I may write it down."

"You have prettier things in the printed books," said old Grethe; "mine are but simple ditties; but they are from ancient days—old now, and passed away."

It was Bodil's habit during winter to read aloud often to the domestics on the Sunday evenings, and old Grethe had frequently made one among her audience. "Bring me a good book," had been Bodil's request, when her father went to Copenhagen and when her mother had laid her injunctions on him to bring her "a bad boy—the son of depraved parents."

A good book had been brought, the charming romances, with woodcuts, of Christian Winther. The tree of poetry has many branches—some are smooth

and polished, others full of beauty and vigour, and the latter description might be applied to the poems that were brought Bodil. Kingo's "Aandelige Sjungechor," a printed copy, with some of Brorson's and Ingemann's soul-inspiring hymns, formed her treasure of poetic literature, and when she perceived how much Niels was pleased with them, she lent them willingly to him. There is one blessing attendant on mental treasures—the more we can share them with others, the more we enjoy them ourselves. He thus acquired a love of poetry. As we have seen before, he was well acquainted with the Bible, and knew all the stories in the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments" before he left Copenhagen; he was not one to let his light shine under a bushel, so everybody at the Manse was soon aware of his learning, and as he discoursed about things and expounded them according to his own ideas to the rustics, he was called by them "the preacher." It was declared among them that he would make an excellent clergyman, and Mrs. Mollerup adopted the idea. She was overjoyed at his Biblical knowledge, his cleverness, and at his actually being a Latin scholar!

We owe it as an act of justice to the good lady to say that she was the first to propose that Niels should become a student. He had brains enough, she thought, and if he were not the godless child she had once wished to adopt, in order to make him a convert to Christianity, he was perhaps one who, with her poor

assistance, might become a shepherd of the Lord's flock! The ways of God were wonderful! who could tell what Niels might become? Perhaps he might even rise so high in the church as to be a dean, a dignity which *her* husband—the worthiest and most superior of men—had never attained in this world; whereon she could not help thinking our Lord permitted too much power to be vested in men. She would take the first opportunity of speaking to the minister about it.

Niels continued reading and improving, he took also great pleasure in fairy and traditionary lore, was much interested in hearing about “the invisible stone at Dybdal,” the hill-folks or elves, and more particularly about the Swedish war two hundred years ago, when the Polish auxiliary troops came into the country, and brought with them Tartars, Kalmucks, and Turks. These extraneous tribes and these times had vanished, but one strange people was still here—“the Kjeltring race”—that half-mystic, vagabond tribe, who, shy and timorous, were here one day and away the next. The clergyman explained to him the meaning of the name “Kjeltring:” he said that they were not originally so called, that word being only a common or vulgar corruption of “Kedeldreng”—copper boy—because these people used formerly to mend kettles and other copper articles; but they were a wandering community, who could not be trusted, nor were they all of the same race; there

were some real gipsies among them, and these were to be distinguished by their coal-black, eagle-like eyes, and their whole appearance. Only one of the ancient gipsy blood had been seen lately about, and that was the female who had met Niels on the heath.

Old Grethe had heard from her grandmother many stories about them; among others, that long, long ago, when wolves roamed about in flocks, and there were also plenty of wild boars, the Jutland gipsies, who were then an outlawed people, hunted them down, and were in the habit of cutting their ears and splitting their noses whenever they could. That they had held a summary court-martial once over one of their people in Silkeborg wood; when stripped almost to the skin, the dark youth was placed under a large tree, and compelled to hold a white stick in his mouth. The whole tribe formed a circle round him, the chief delivered a discourse in their heathen tongue, and at its conclusion spat in his face, after which the women flogged him out of the circle; and from that hour he was an outcast from their community.

How attentively did not Niels listen to such narratives! Often and often he wandered far away on the heath, where it was said the Kjeltrings had shown themselves; but he never fell in with any of them, nor did he again see the Fata Morgana, which had lately so astonished, nay, terrified him.

The autumn had passed away, and Christmas had

come with its snow, and with all its holy observances, so much attended to in the loneliness of distant country life. It had also brought its accustomed festivals. The domestics danced in the barn; they were regaled with stir-about and apple dumplings, tea, and even punch. The musician Grethe sang ballads, and played for dancing; it was as good, the rustics said, as a violin and clarionet. The snow-drifts were so high around, that there was no trace left of the road, no difference visible between hill and dale: the air itself resembled a tearing, whirling, gulf-stream of snow. Old Grethe could not have reached her dwelling, much less have been able to enter it, for it was literally lost amidst the accumulation of snow. The Manse itself was blockaded, and all its inmates had to remain within doors. During the long evenings, Niels became the most frequent reader; and on one occasion he had selected the Bible history of Tobias and the Angel, which he was expounding with so much earnestness, that he did not perceive that Japetus Mollerup himself had become one of his audience, until the old gentleman, at the conclusion of his lecture, exclaimed,—

“Bravo, Niels! You have profited much by your Bible studies.”

When Mrs. Mollerup communicated her ideas to her husband, he quite coincided in them, and the boy's future career was at once settled. A guardian

angel, like the one that accompanied the young Tobias, had also followed the destitute boy from the round tower; he was to become a student of divinity, a worthy labourer in the vineyard of the Lord.

Japetus Mollerup reflected that amidst the arrogance and presumption of the world, and its many false lights, the young theologian might be drawn from the true faith; it would be a blessed work if he could protect and strengthen that now pious, childish mind, and impress in it, in all its purity and perfection, the Word of God. Yes! this would be a good work. It was an excellent idea of his wife's that Niels should be brought up to the church; he had abilities, and this might be a real benefit, not to the poor boy alone, but also to his fellow-creatures.

Japetus Mollerup had been formerly a clever, experienced tutor. Besides "the General" and his brother, Herr Svane, whom he had instructed in his student days, he had prepared for the university, and with great credit, two young men, who had since filled important official situations; in fact, he had at one time lived by giving lessons. He had forgotten some of the branches he used to teach; but with Greek and Latin, and even mathematics, he was still as well acquainted as ever, and he felt that it would be a pleasure to brush up again his old studies. Niels thereupon now commenced in earnest learning Latin. Who



would have dreamed of this, when he used to stand with his father in the lobby at Regentsen, and help him to clean the students' boots !

Both the teacher and the pupil set to work with equal zeal, and their diligence went on increasing. The old clergyman took quite a pleasure in this new employment, for Niels spared no pains, and did not seem to find even the dry rudiments wearisome. It was a recreation rather than a task, and the Bible became his favourite study.

We should, however, be saying what was not true if we averred that Niels was always poring over his books ; no—with all the gleeful spirit of a boy, he would mount the old horse that usually wandered about the clay pits, and gallop off. He had also become good friends with Bjœf, the watch-dog,—he who used to run away from every little tiny cur in that canine capital, Copenhagen.

Winter soon passed over, then came spring ; the first budding branch of a beech-tree from the wood was exhibited at the Manse to show how warm the air must be outside ; within the house the difference was not so easily perceived. The corn looked so green, the lark flew up in the air with its thrilling song, and the storks had returned at length—even the dark storks, that sat upon the trees in the bogs, and looked angrily at their white comrades that splashed about in the shallow, muddy water. From the sterile, sandy

soil issued bilberries and cranberries; the bracken spread forth its green, feathery leaves, the juniper-tree and the holly looked charming in their fresh light green foliage. But whoever looks around him can describe nature as it is every summer; of Niels, on the contrary, we cannot hear every summer, and therefore we shall return to him.

## CHAPTER VI.

## WILD-DUCK SHOOTING—BECOMING A STUDENT.

THE so-called "Old Avlsgaard," near Aalevørket, where now-a-days the town of Silkeborg stands, was about a mile \* from the Manse, and to arrive at it, not only Hvindingedalsbanker, but almost the whole of Lake Lange and Gudenaå, had to be traversed. The road was heavy, and often impassable for carriages. Foot passengers had an easier and much shorter path from the Manse, if they crossed the hill and descended to the lake, where the only ferryman's house lies close to the sloping sand. The lake is here very narrow, and on crossing it one was, though wading through deep sand, but at a short distance from Aalevørket and Avlsgaarden, where Herr Skjöldt resided, who had the charge of the eel-beds, at that time the property of the Government. The country round, belonging to the "royal domains," as they were called, remained barren and uncultivated, and yet the solitude there was less than on the heath and at the Manse; one might have fancied it the scene of Aristophanes' "Birds." In this wilderness of reeds and rushes, and old gnarled

\* A Danish mile.

alder-trees, where the water-lilies form entire islands, were always swarms of birds, which but twice a year could be disturbed by sportsmen in search of otters and wild ducks.

Herr Skjöldt was an enthusiastic sportsman, and all the game that appeared at the Manse came as presents from him. Niels saw the splendid feathers of the wild ducks, and other birds, and heard Herr Skjöldt himself tell of his sporting adventures—it was a new world of interest and pleasure to him. But Niels had not yet learned to fire a gun, and a long time elapsed before he himself was permitted to try his hand as a sportsman ; it was not until the third autumn that he had been in Jutland. Herr Skjöldt had often remarked how much Niels wished to go with him, and when the boy had proved himself so studious and devoted to his books, Japetus Mollerup thought that a little hard exercise in the fresh air would be good for him, and gave him permission to accompany Herr Skjöldt to shoot wild ducks. This, his first essay as a sportsman, for he actually did discharge his gun, though he killed nothing, remained prominent in his mind, though many a stirring day's hunting in after-years was forgotten ; it formed one of those trifling souvenirs which we retain for life, while greater events vanish from the memory. On this occasion his wish to meet some real gipsies was gratified.

There were two guns at the Manse, one good, and

one which was somewhat out of order. Niels wished to take one of them, but Mrs. Mollerup and Bodil were quite opposed to his having a gun, they thought it enough that he should look on. Old Japetus, however, overruled their objections, declaring that every sportsman must have a gun—that Niels was quite old enough to be trusted with one. Herr Skjöldt would look after him, and the Lord would protect him.

At the dawn of day, before the sun was up, Niels and Herr Skjöldt were to be among the rushes; they left the Manse therefore the evening before, to sleep at old Avlsgaard. Niels had on a pair of large waterproof boots, belonging to the minister. Thus encumbered, he found the way very long, though it was only over Hvindingedal's highest hill down to the ferry-house, and after crossing the ferry there was not far to go.

The weather was somewhat stormy, and it blew quite a gale when they had ascended the hill. Lake Lange seemed covered with white foam, it was the place, mentioned in tradition, where a Bishop Peder, who was determined to build a baronial castle, sailed about, uncertain what site to select for it. The wind blew off his silken cap, and he vowed to erect the castle on the spot where the cap might be driven on shore. He carried this idea into effect, and the castle was called "Silkeborg." But it was destroyed during the Swedish war; not one stone of the ancient edifice was now

left standing, only two large oaks towered over the alder trees there, and pointed out where formerly the gateway of the castle had stood.

When Herr Skjöldt and Neils reached the ferry-house, they saw the boat they were to cross in, drawn far up among the reeds, for the waves of the lake were high, the white froth from them was lifted up by the wind and whirled in the air, so that it flew in their faces.

They went to the ferry-house door, which was fastened with a cord, and entered the low room, to the roof of which even Niels almost reached. Besides the ferryman and his wife, they found there a strongly-built woman, in a large man's hat, such as are used to the westward; she was occupying herself with something on the floor, and the ferryman's wife, after having saluted the new comers, glanced towards her, or rather fixed her eyes upon her.

"It is blowing hard outside!" said Herr Skjöldt, "but the boat will stand it very well—won't it?"

"Shall my husband row you over!" asked the ferryman's wife, and looking towards the woman, she said, "Well, you can go too."

"Oh dear, oh dear!" replied the woman.

The husband took a dram first, and assuring him it was of the best quality, offered some to Herr Skjöldt.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" said the woman again, for she seemed to have no great wish to venture upon the ugly water, which was rolling and moaning like the sea itself.

"What is that she is busy with?" asked Herr Skjöldt.

"GRUMSLING!" she exclaimed; and now they saw that it was a wizened-looking, crippled child, deformed in its limbs, and with a large head, but with dark glaring eyes: "FIFTARIS OLDERS!"\* she said, holding up her five fingers.

"It is a sad infliction on her!" observed the ferryman's wife. But the woman's countenance immediately assumed an expression which said,—"It is my dearest treasure, though!" She got up suddenly, and in doing this struck her head against the low roof, so that her broad-brimmed hat was knocked to one side, and her dark sharply-chiselled features, and a pair of eyes piercing as those of a wild bird, were distinctly seen. Niels recognised her as the female he had encountered when he was lying in a fit of despair amidst the heather; and he knew that she was one of the real gipsy race.

"You had better go over," said the ferryman's wife; "you will at least be able to reach Aalevørket; ask Herr Skjöldt."

They all left the house; the wind whistled amidst the reeds and the rushes, which bent as if they were about to break, and bowed low over the waters, that, dark and foaming, rolled by. The boat was brought out; Niels and Herr Skjöldt seated themselves as best

\* Five years of age.

they could ; feeling already as if they were in a swing ; it was difficult for the gipsy woman to find a place, but at last she squatted down in the bottom of the boat, holding on her lap her "Grumsling" just before Niels, upon whom she fixed her dark, speaking eyes.

"Oh dear !" shrieked the woman, when the boat was fairly off. The blast howled again, and there came a gust of wind and a swell on the water which almost overset the ferry-boat.

"Oh dear—my Grumsling !" she screamed loudly, as she made a sudden jerk with her body, which did not add to the safety of the passengers ; but the "Grumsling" lay quiet through it all—he was hard of hearing.

"Hold your jaw, and be still !" cried the ferryman, tartly.

On account of the wind, they had to make a long circuit, it was almost dark before they reached the other side of the lake. The gipsy-woman uttered but two words, these were probably thanks, but Niels did not understand her, and before he had time to think what she might have meant, she was already gone. But the impression made on him by her and her idiot child, indeed by the whole of the little voyage across the lake in that weather, was never erased from his mind. The rain now began to fall in torrents ; they had certainly but a short distance to go to Avlsgaarden, but it was as if they were passing through a slough ; Niels sank deep in at every step, and well it was for him



that he had the clergyman's waterproof boots on, but he was wet to the skin.

"There was only one thing to be done," said Herr Skjöldt; and when they reached Avlsgaarden, the boy was obliged to take off every atom of his own clothing and equip himself in garments belonging to Herr Skjöldt, which were of course much too large for him in all respects. His own clothes were hung up before a fire to dry, as he was to wear them on the expedition of the following day. And for the well-soaked travellers themselves, refreshments were speedily procured. There were stewed eels, and fried eels, sour kroust, and arrack punch; Niels took a large glass full—"he must be strengthened for the next day, and a sportsman should always be able to take his glass," said Herr Skjöldt.

The toilsome walk and strong punch made Niels very sleepy, and he had scarcely laid his head on his pillow when his eyes were closed in slumber. But whether it was imagination, or the potent arrack, the sour kroust, or the rich eels, or perhaps the whole conjointly, sleep brought before him a very strange dream. The idiot child was sitting on his knee, and staring at him with his glaring eyes; it appeared to him that he was overcome by the creature's gaze, he felt himself benumbed as it were, and without any strength in his limbs, whilst heavier and heavier became the "Grum-sling," whose arms, which, as he raised them, looked like the wings of a bat, closed tightly round him; the wings were slender and transparent, and yet so power-

ful that he tried in vain to throw off the disgusting grasp. Loudly and mockingly laughed the creature—he could bear it no longer, and making a desperate effort to free himself from his horrid assailant, he suddenly awoke, and found Herr Skjöldt standing by his bedside.

“You must get up,” he said. “You have slept full seven hours, it is time that we were off.”

To poor Niels it had only seemed a quarter of an hour, but a very disagreeable quarter. Delighted that his unpleasant dream was over, he sprang out of bed, and was soon dressed in his still damp clothes; the boots were more difficult to put on, for though much too large for his feet, they had become hard and shrivelled from the day before.

But the day’s sport was thoroughly enjoyed; the ducks were shot—splendid wild ducks—the dogs chased them from amidst the reeds and rushes. Nevertheless, that day’s sport and the idiot child of his dream became so inseparably connected in his remembrance, that “it must betide something,” said the good lady at the Manse. We will see if it did betide anything.

His wish to become a sportsman was not damped, but rather increased by this first essay; the excitement of the chase thenceforth held a conspicuous place in his recollections—it was connected with the thoughts of home, and his boyhood’s years on the Jutland heath. He gave his whole soul to the chase when he was en-

gaged in it, but he always returned with avidity to his books when the time came to resume his studies. In whatever he undertook he evinced a fixedness of purpose, and unflinching perseverance. That violence of temper which he had betrayed when he flung the cat against the stove was now very seldom evinced—would it ever break out with increased vehemence in future?

It was fortunate for him that the new home of his childhood was admirably adapted to a nature like his. A spirit of peace seemed to breathe over everything at the Manse, and the sincerely Christian feelings of the inmates made it all sunshine around. His young mind seemed to have received there an inward light, and thus thought Bodil, who was to him the most affectionate and kindest of sisters: "Yes," she said, "throughout the whole of his career as a man, will the love and peace he has been accustomed to here, during his childhood, retain their benign influence over his heart." The old people rejoiced at his pious sentiments, his Bible knowledge, and his zeal in the cause of truth; he even seemed much inclined to become a missionary, in order to proclaim the word of God to benighted nations.

The day of confirmation, which was at Michaelmas, and the first day of taking the Sacrament, were days of a covenant with God, God the Father—at whose right hand sits the Son, and with whom dwells the Holy Spirit—three, and yet one and the same!

"The arrogance of mankind riots wildly!" exclaimed

the old clergyman ; “and for a time God permits evil to be victorious ; but the pure light of truth is like the sun, which shines forth as a conqueror after days of darkness, dispelling the gloom, and chasing the black clouds away.”

When Niels was a child at his home in the round tower, he used to look upon the Bible and the “Arabian Nights’ Entertainments” as about equally true. Now the tales were transferred to their proper place ; the Bible was alone the Holy Word of truth ; it stood like a mighty tree whose roots had fastened themselves in his heart, and amidst whose thickly-spreading boughs the voice of God was heard to murmur. Yes, the Bible was the Book of Books ! At the Manse, the Scriptures were the guide of all their thoughts and actions,—thus the spiritual was wedded to the corporeal. And if superstition had sometimes found an entrance, and the Devil, with his fearful might, was dreaded as a terrible being, what power could he have over really pious Christians ? God was their shield and defence ; his all-seeing eye was ever upon them, his ear open to their prayers, to Him would they cling—to Him who, though He was so stern a judge that He consigned hardened sinners to that everlasting fire which was never to be extinguished, was yet all merciful. It was thus that Niels learned to know and worship that God, in whose name, through the teaching of the Son, he was to go forth and labour.

The quiet, uniform life at the Manse seemed, as it

was flowing on, to be endless, and yet on New Year's Eve, the whole past year, on looking back, appeared to have glided quickly away.

Year followed year, and the seventh year since the arrival of Niels into Jutland had been entered upon. "It was wonderful to think how fast the time had gone," said the mother. "It was still more wonderful," observed Bodil, "that they had remained together for so long a time."

Niels thought so too—like a dream—a very different lifetime, his early years in Copenhagen presented themselves to his mind ; he was soon to return thither, to become a student !

The time at length arrived : about the middle of September he was to go to Copenhagen ; there where for six long years he had not been—years that had been devoted to improvement, and in which lay the transition-age.

"He was now," said his adopted mother, "to quit his peaceful home, to cross the wild sea again, and to enter the sinful world ! Formerly he had lived there as an innocent child, now he returned a growing man—a weak vessel—to that place where the Devil roamed about like a roaring lion. But the desire of many a long day was now going to be accomplished ; he was to become a student !" *To become a student !*

What joy, what freedom, what importance do not these words convey to the youthful ear ! Though, as the period approached when he was to leave all that

was so dear to him, he found it rather a severe trial, but he did not wish his sad feelings to be observed, and yet one might almost have thought that Bjœf, the watch-dog, had remarked them, for he whined a great deal, and seemed quite sorrowful. Niels, who once would gladly have quitted Copenhagen solely on account of the dogs there, was now in tears at bidding a dog farewell. Indeed, he was so changed in this respect from his former self, that he even expressed the bold wish to take a dog with him. Herr Skjœdt's "Baldine" had four puppies, and one of these Niels wished to have, without reflecting that he would be thereby adding another dog to the myriads already in Copenhagen, and that *one* might become the progenitor of a whole race! Japetus Møllerup, however, was wise enough to oppose his desire; Niels would have enough to do to take care of himself and his books.

All that was needful in the way of linen and woollen under-garments was provided for him by the good mother—nice and new they were; she strewed lavender among his clothes to give them a good scent; not the smallest article that might be of use to him was forgotten, neither white thread nor black thread, common needles nor darning needles, nay, even a thimble, for Niels would now have to sew on his own buttons when they came off.

The old Bible was packed up for him, and "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments," not to mention all

the learned books that were to ensure his taking brilliant honours at college.

Bodil and her mother wept, the maids in the kitchen and the dairy wept, the clergyman kissed him, as did all the rest, and the good man said, "Never forget the Lord's Prayer—in it you will have a guide for life!"

The carriage came to the door, the steamer lay at Aarhus, and when it had conveyed him to Copenhagen, everything was ready for his reception there.

Herr Svane had secured lodgings for him at the house of a worthy woman, Madam Jensen, in Sværte Street; it was a good situation, in the centre of the town, and yet not far from the university.

"Farewell, dear home—farewell, brown heath!"

Now for Copenhagen.

## CHAPTER VII.

MADAM JENSEN—MOTHER BÖRRE—"HIGH LIFE BELOW-STAIRS."

It was with peculiar feelings that Niels returned to the town where his childhood had been passed, yet of which, with the exception of the round tower and Regentsen, he knew so little; he certainly, however, knew his godfather, Herr Svane, and *he* was waiting at the Custom House to receive Niels Bryde—for, in future, we must give him his family name. Tall and handsome had he grown, said Herr Svane, high born he was, as his birth-place had been at the top of the tower; well born every one could see that he also was. "We Copenhageners are very witty," he added; "you must accustom yourself to it."

Herr Svane took him straight to Sværte Street, to Madam Jensen—"the lonely widow," as she called herself.

The entrance to the student's apartments was through the kitchen; but notwithstanding this unfortunate approach, they were neat and clean, and tolerably well furnished.



"See, here is a curtain," said his hostess, "and you can hang up your clothes behind it, so that they will not get dusty; and here is a book-case for your books; it is somewhat crooked, to be sure, for it was first put up in a garret, where the walls are never straight. Ah! I see you have a book there that would suit me," she exclaimed, looking at a volume he had just laid upon the table. "The print is so large. I cannot read anything now but large print, for my sight has become very bad since I wept so much during the first years of my widowhood. I sincerely wish that you may never know the misery of being a widower. I have had opportunities of changing my situation, to be sure,—offers have not been wanting—but I could not possibly run the risk of being a second time a widow. Oh, no!"

Everything was now arranged in the student's rooms; the good lady had brought a large oil-painting thither from her own parlour—the portrait of some dame of noble though unknown lineage; the lady in the old picture did not look very amiable, or in the best of humours: one might have fancied she was not over-pleased at being transferred to the lodger's apartment; but though removed to it apparently to ornament it, she was, in reality, made use of to hide a large rent in the papering.

The examination began, and it ended well. "Laudabilis" on all heads, even in mathematics, although that had been only taught by an old Jutland parson.

But Niels Bryde had a mathematical genius. It is an erroneous idea that where there is much imagination there is little depth of thought ; but those who advance this are perhaps not much endowed themselves with either.

In one of the most confined and least airy streets of Copenhagen resided our student. It was very different from the Manse and the heath, where the healthy breeze blew over the fresh heather ; but Copenhagen had its own advantages and pleasures. Niels liked his new companions and his student life, although his heart was still in his Jutland home, and this was apparent in every letter that he sent thither.

Mrs. Mollerup rejoiced that Niels was intimate with Herr Svane, who was an elderly person, knew all the ways of the town, and would doubtless watch over his godson, advise and assist him ; she thought it also a great advantage to Niels that he lodged with such a worthy woman as Madam Jansen. Everybody at the Manse was proud that " the son," as he was called, had passed such an excellent examination, and the mother considered his proficiency in Latin as his greatest triumph.

By the first vessel from Aarhus many good things were sent to Niels, such as cheese, butter, &c., and Madam Jensen received the present of a nice ham for her kindness to him. She was indeed so kind as to impart to him all the joys and sorrows she had in her little household ; and it was the servant-girl, Ane

Sophie, who was the principal object of her eulogies and complaints.

"She has not got much sense, Herr Student," said Madam Jensen. "If I send her of an evening to the grocer's, she does nothing but stare at the moon ; she fancies it is following her, and when she comes out, she thinks it has been standing still waiting for her, and that it actually follows her home !"

Madam Jansen formed a very good opinion of the student's character and conduct. She pronounced him to be a well-behaved, respectable young man, who did not keep the fashionable late hours, but came home early, when the play was not unusually long. For it must be told that the first worldly pleasure which Niels coveted was to go to the theatre ; but that was "a harmless and genteel amusement," said Madam Jensen. She herself was not in the habit of going to the theatre. She had not once entered a playhouse since her husband's death three years ago ; but she had half a mind to go now. Perhaps there might one evening be a benefit for the family of some deceased actor, and that would be a proper occasion for her going ; it would be a charity. It so happened that there *was* such a benefit, and she went. But she was not at all gratified, and came away before the representation was over.

"There was nothing to amuse one," she said ; "they chose a very deep tragedy !" and truly she had sorrows enough of her own. However, she might have sat it

out, but she was driven away by a very disagreeable person, who was in the same box with her ; a very forward, impertinent young gentleman. " I don't know if you have seen them in Jutland," she added, " but here, at the apothecaries' shops, are sold certain little cakes, called ' Pyllemönter,' which are highly scented ; they are *love cakes* ; and if a man gives them to a woman, and she eats them, she falls in love with him. I assure you this actually happened to a young lady ; she only ate a couple of these Pyllemönter, given to her by a young man, and she fell in love with him ! There sat I in the box, in my deep mourning dress ; I was not in very good humour, either with the tragedy or my place. ' My pretty lady,' said he, ' pray take one,' and offered me a boxful of these little white cakes. I took one, but let it fall quietly, and a little after he offered me another, of which I also disposed in the same way ; but at last he went so far as to press the whole boxful on me ; and as I could not sit and throw them all away, I got up, and left him and the theatre. I would not allow myself to be deluded."

So Madam Jensen did not see the whole of the tragedy, and she had but little inclination, she said, to revisit the theatre, still she would not mind going once in a way, though certainly not twice a week as Niels Bryde did. However, she was tempted to entrust herself there another night—merely, as she declared, because the cheesemonger's daughter was to make her appearance on the boards. " A nice-looking gir

with a sweet voice ; but she did not sing alone, she sang with several others, and exactly the same thing that they did." Madam Jensen meant to say that she was a chorus-singer.

Niels Bryde enjoyed the poetry of the drama as well as the mimic life on the stage, but he did not neglect his studies. Natural philosophy and astronomy were the sciences that interested him the most, they seemed to open undreamed-of treasures of thought to him ; but Greek, Latin, and Hebrew were not despised. No cares pressed upon his mind, his adopted parents provided for all his wants ; and he was not tormented by any of those manifold domestic annoyances of which Madam Jensen complained so bitterly as attendant upon her widowed state. But now we have become acquainted with his redoubtable hostess, we may accompany Niels beyond the precincts of Sværte Street.

Regentsen and the round tower were naturally not the two last places he visited. At Regentsen the same sort of free and easy life was going on as formerly ; but among the students, there was, of course, not one to be seen whom he remembered in his childhood—these were spread all over the country as clergymen, physicians, or in the various grades of the law. But the moment he entered the round tower he recognised an old acquaintance ; she looked scarcely a day older for the six years he had been absent, her sight only had become a little weaker ; it was Mother Börre, who sold

the red sugar-plums, and had sold her own corpse. She did not know Niels, he had grown so much; students passed daily into the tower, who did not notice her.

“You do not remember me!” exclaimed Niels; “and yet formerly you used to see me every day and talk to me!”

She looked at him from top to toe, and peered inquiringly into his face, at length a light seemed to dawn upon her.

“Lord bless me!” she then exclaimed; “can it be the boy Niels!”

The name grated rather harshly on the student’s ear, but he overcame the momentary vexation, and shook hands with her.

“Only think!” she cried; “how well he is dressed! and a student too! what a happiness for his parents in their graves!”

She took off her spectacles, and wiped her eyes, then with the selfishness of old age, she began to complain that she only lived from hand to mouth, and had nothing to depend upon. Niels Bryde had to listen to what she paid for bread and butter, and peats—and lastly that she had some of the best apples, and plenty of nice new sweet-stuffs, which were very good for students who were always stooping over their books.

The conversation was very friendly, and she found that Niels had scarcely become at all proud; and she

was right, to a certain extent, though this will hardly agree with what we have further to tell.

Up in the tower he met a young Count Spuhl, who was one of his fellow-students; they joined each other, and on coming down were engaged in earnest conversation when passing Mother Börre. As Niels did not seem to intend noticing her, she called out, loudly and distinctly, "Good-by, little Niels!" This familiar appellation embarrassed him very much, he turned crimson, and bowed awkwardly to her.

"Does that old woman know you?" asked the count.

"Yes, she knew me when I was a child," replied Niels; "and always calls me 'little Niels!' I do not grow much in her eyes."

They then spoke on other subjects, and separated after a little while; but Niels Bryde felt angry at himself—he was pained to think that from a feeling of false pride he had almost denied his acquaintance with Mother Börre. He remembered how often at home in Jutland, when he had read of Peter denying his Lord and Master, he had considered his conduct inconceivable as well as wicked. Yet still Peter had been influenced by fear and danger. He, on the contrary, only because he was walking with a young nobleman, had felt it disagreeable to have his acquaintance claimed by a poor old woman, who sold sugar-plums, as if this placed him in a lower station of life. He said to him-

self: "You appeared not to know her before she, as if inspired by the Lord to punish you, lifted up her voice and cried, 'Good-by, little Niels !' If you had nodded in a kind manner to her, you would not have deserved to be humbled—*humbled* ! and why should it have humbled me ?" he thought again ; "there is something of a coward in me ! But this cowardice shall be rooted out of me !"

And he could be very determined. He resolved to watch himself more narrowly, and other people also.

"And now I am going to introduce you a little into the world," said Herr Svane one day to him, with a smile that showed he was in excellent spirits. "You must go with me to a scene of 'high life below-stairs.' I am going to take you to visit Herr Meibum, a person of my own stamp, an old bachelor without rank or title ; he has dabbled in various arts, been a painter, an actor, an editor ; been betrothed, and free again, and has managed to exist notwithstanding. He has lately inherited a few hundred dollars, and so he is very judiciously going to give a grand turn-out at one of our first-rate restaurateurs. Kindred souls, slight and intimate acquaintances, are all invited ; and as I happen both to be a kindred soul and an acquaintance, I may bring a guest, especially one of your calibre, nurtured in the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments,' and yet a proficient in mathematics."



So Niels went to the Copenhagen party at Herr Meibum's.

A well-lighted staircase led to a suite of rooms, in which were blazing a number of candles in silver branches. At the first door stood Herr Meibum himself, dressed as a lady in a turban, and with beauty spots; he was the hostess, he said, in an affectedly soft voice. In the same dulcet tones he welcomed, and named by their titles, all the various individuals as they arrived, particularly a captain in a burgher corps, and a pair of female book-keepers; the most distinguished of the men was secretary to a coach-maker, and the most brilliant lady a jeweller's wife, who appeared to have borrowed half the trinkets in her husband's shop to adorn her head, neck, and arms.

One of the rooms was fitted up as a theatre; two original pieces were to be given which had never before been performed, and which, indeed, had not been printed; one was by Herr Meibum, and was called "Jomfruen er Lumsk; or, Smaa Gryder har ogsaa Erer;" the other was by an anonymous person, that is to say, also by Herr Meibum, and was called "I Mol; or, Comala sover."

Punch was handed to the gentlemen, and lemonade to the ladies. The bread and butter was somewhat stale and hard, but Herr Meibum said, by way of excuse, that he had cut it all himself, and it had taken him three days to do it. Two violins and a


flute formed quite an orchestra, the flute performer being a young lady, who was, of course, very interesting; but Niels did not listen much to the music, for he had made the acquaintance of a young painter, who took much pleasure in speaking about his art, and about himself. His conversation was quite melodramatic; we must hear it too.

"Nature," said he, "is always good as a study; it is always correct, but scarcely ever more. Genius must improve it. The great masters have done this. Look at sculpture; in that we have Thorwaldsen—good for his day—very good!—Praxiteles, good, also, for his age. The younger race, we who come, as it were, on the shoulders of the elder—you will admit that those borne on the shoulders of others are higher than those who thus bear them—we, the rising sons of genius, are higher than they! Our genius discerns the faults of these ancient masters, but we regard them with respect! I am not a sculptor myself; it is too cold, too limited a branch of art for me; a figure, nay, even a group, is but patchwork! The world displays itself in brilliant tints; we catch these: then comes genius, and, on a flat surface, portrays all the varieties of depth and shade! The globe itself, history, poetry, allegory, all become living. Marble can only represent attitudes; painting gives life and colour. Poetry has often to be conned over for hours, before one can get at its obscure meaning; painting, on the contrary,—

Bah! *that* is worth thinking of—that is genius! That is *my* path!”

At that moment the curtain rose for “Jomfruen er Lumsk.” “The young lady is deceitful,” and tiresome she was also, although Herr Meibum acted, and in his younger days he had appeared on the boards of “the Theatre Royal,” and had taken a part in “The Magic Flute;” subsequently also at a minor theatre he had sustained the character of Hamlet with much credit. At the end of the piece all the performers were called for, Herr Meibum three times; and the last time he recited some impromptu verses he had composed the preceding day, lauding the discriminating good taste of the public, and requesting indulgence for his own deficiencies; it was one fib after another, but that did not signify. Niels saw and heard without paying much attention to the histrionic efforts which were taking place. On his right hand he had Herr Svane, on his left he had a student, one of that peculiar class in whose world-surveying philosophical eyes mankind is a nonentity.

Øhlenschläger has introduced into one of his tragedies a warrior, who was so haughty that he never laughed. This sounds very well in reading, but when seen on the stage it appears ridiculous. Here was a type of this glum warrior, but Niels Bryde did not laugh, he was half overawed by the individual whom Herr Svane called “Solon-Diogenes,” and who



occasionally condescended to utter a "good—very good!"

In the interval between the two pieces, ice and jelly were handed round, but there was so little on the plates, that each plate looked as if it only contained the last remaining morsel of some almost finished portion.

The evening was concluded by playing at proverbs, and some other games, in the course of which the fortunate Niels was selected by the damsel who had performed on the flute, to go through the "Polsk Tigger-gang" with her, he obtained a kiss, and paid it back; it was "high life below-stairs" at that grand party.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE ARONS' FAMILY — "SOLON-DIOGENES" — THE JOURNEY  
ABROAD.

NIELS BRYDE was introduced by his fellow-students to a few families who moved in the middling class of society; in one of these, whether it might have been by accident, from similarity of tastes, or any other cause, he felt himself most at home, and visited most frequently—this was at the house of the rich merchant, Arons; his son Julius was a student, along with Herr Bryde; they liked each other, notwithstanding that they were very differently endowed by talents and fortune; Julius Arons was a handsome, good-humoured, well-dressed youth, but not much devoted to study; indeed he had been turned back at his first examination. Of his three sisters he resembled most in face the youngest, Esther, who was between fourteen and fifteen years of age; in other respects, they were very different—she, as they said, was always taken up with books; nobody heard a word about her—nobody knew if she were in the room or not.

It was quite the reverse with her eldest sister,

Rebecca ; *she* did not hide her light under a bushel, and, we cannot deny it, was a little too high upon æsthetic stilts, and raised to her own level her second sister, Amalie, who was only a year younger than her. Rebecca looked upon herself as the principal person in the family, undertook most of the talking, and did not spare her tongue.

Niels Bryde was asked if he would assist Julius in his college studies : he agreed to the proposition, and became a frequent visitor at their pleasant house. Through Steen Blicher's tales the two eldest sisters knew something of Jutland, and they raved about the Jutland heaths, and the gipsies who frequented them. Herr Bryde could speak from his own knowledge on these subjects, and therefore his conversation became very interesting. The gipsy woman and the idiot child, and the Fata Morgana, quite fascinated them—so different from everything in Copenhagen—so very poetic ! Nevertheless Amalie thought it would be dreadful to live where there was no theatre, and scarcely a single ball in the whole year ; the object of her enthusiasm was an actor at the theatre royal—his likeness was hung up in her bedroom.

Niels read now, as has been said, with Julius Arons ; this new occupation procured a certain amount of pocket-money, and enabled him to go more frequently to the theatre, and also to purchase various books he might not otherwise have been able to obtain. Among these were Goethe's works, which he bought on account

of the celebrity of the author, and only read by bits. He liked the lyrical poems, and Werther, but the rest appeared to him *then* heavy and wanting in imagination. He devoured Faust through—at least the first volume, the second volume he thought very unconnected and far-fetched. However he did not at that time understand Goethe. And the Miss Arons assured him, that they felt greatly inclined to say “Goethe is not much of a poet!”

“But his Mignon!” said Amalie, correcting herself, “that is charming. ‘Kennst Du das Land?’” and she recited the commencement of the poem: her sister interrupted her with,—

“No, Schiller! Do you remember Johannes, ‘Lebt wohl, ihr Berge?’”

However, we must not condemn the two sisters from this little specimen of their conversation, for in many things they really were clever, well-informed, and agreeable girls.

Of the people to whom Niels Bryde had been introduced at Herr Meibum’s *soirée*, there were only two with whom he kept up a slight acquaintance, bowing to them when he met them at the theatre, or in the street. One was the painter—the genius on the shoulders of the ancient masters—the other, “Solon-Diogenes,” as he was called.

One very cold day it so happened that Niels and Solon-Diogenes had both gone to “Langelinie,” and by accident were standing near each other, looking at

a ship that was frozen in ; they entered into conversation, in the course of which Niels made use of the expression, "Our Lord up yonder."

"So you think he dwells up there?" said the student, with a peculiar smile. "Do you really believe in Him?"

Our young friend shuddered, he had never heard such words before. They were not uttered apparently in jest, and had they been so, it was a shocking jest.

"Do *you* not believe in Him, then?" he exclaimed, while his heart beat violently.

"I have got over all that," replied the student, with a smile; but he turned the conversation to other subjects, and they parted soon after.

Nothing, for a long time past, had made so deep an impression on Niels Bryde as these carelessly-spoken words: he gazed at the man as if he were a being lost for ever, a vassal of Hell; nevertheless, as the eye of the rattlesnake is said to have a facinating power over birds, so this man seemed to possess an unaccountable attraction for Niels. One evening not long after, they happened to sit next each other in the pit at the theatre; the student informed Niels that he did not care for modern literature, and that he scarcely ever read any author who was not two thousand years old; one exception to his rule, however, he had made lately—he had been reading Strauss's "Life of Jesus," and that Niels ought to read that work, as he was studying



for the church—"it would enlighten him much," he said.

Without knowing anything further of the work, Niels Bryde felt convinced that it must be a second "Cyprianus"—unchristian, devilish. The student wished to lend him the book.

The very next day it was sent to him; in its pages he saw nothing but audacious presumption, very different from the simple and pious faith inculcated on his mind from his childhood; it seemed to him that in that book he had in his chamber a brittle glass full of poison, nay, containing the serpent himself, who whispered from the tree of knowledge. He concealed the volume, no one must see that he had it; he felt as if he were committing a sin whenever he opened it, yet he had read and read on with increasing interest, and did not perceive that what he read had any Satanic influence over him; on the contrary, it appeared to him that his thoughts became clearer and more lofty; but not for the world would he have written home to the Manse that he was reading Strauss.

When he returned the book, he felt an involuntary sensation of being more on a footing, more capable of associating with a higher order of intellects, with the spirits of angels or devils, to whom he, in his unenlightened state, had considered "Solon-Diogenes" to belong. Had that person received him with a warm

embrace, as the superior of the convent received the young novice, it would not have surprised him who had shown an inclination to read the "Free-thinker's Book."

"I have read it," said Niels, with a look of grave signification, and the student received the book back with perfect indifference, merely answering, "Oh, have you?" No one could have shown more *sang froid* had it been nothing but a cookery-book, or some trashy novel; yet the perusal of it had caused Niels to feel as if he were a castaway, as if he had eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, which was "to make one wise."

In the approaching summer Niels Bryde was to return for a few weeks to his beloved Jutland home and friends. He rejoiced in the prospect; it seemed to him as if half a lifetime had passed since he left them; all his dear old remembrances would be refreshed; would this also be the case with the simple faith of his childhood? As a student of divinity he might even ascend the pulpit; what happiness that would be to Bodil and her mother! He looked out what would be the lesson for the first Sunday he should be at home, he chose from it the text of his first sermon; but when it was written down, the discourse was not as if it had welled from a fresh fountain, and been the outpouring of his own individual sentiments; it seemed rather, that in the prospect of filling his adopted father's place in the pulpit, he had

borrowed his ideas and style: this would doubtless please the old man; Niels hardly knew then how much he himself was changed. Meanwhile he felt sincere pleasure at the thought of so soon seeing his early friends, and there was no less rejoicing at the Manse on account of his expected visit. For six long months had Niels been away! Letters indeed had frequently brought tidings of him; but what are letters from those we love, compared to their actual presence; what are written words to the free interchange of thought in the daily intercourse of life!

Herr Svane had often talked of one day or other paying a visit to his old tutor in Jutland; there was now a good opportunity of doing so, for he could have a travelling companion in Niels. It was therefore agreed that they should start for Jutland together, in the approaching summer. There was nothing apparently to prevent their projected excursion, and yet it was prevented. How little reliance can be placed on any of our plans and resolutions, when are they not ordered by a higher power! One hour at the merchant's, Herr Arons, upset the whole arrangement.

An elder Herr Arons, grandfather to Julius and his sisters, a very worthy, kind-hearted old gentleman, who still adhered to the Jewish faith, had taken a great fancy for Niels Bryde, and was delighted that he had consented to be private tutor to his grandson, whom he had safely carried through the so much-

dreaded examination. As a reward to his grandson for the exertions he had made to attain the much-desired success, the old gentleman proposed that he should be allowed a month's pleasure trip to Hamburg, Dresden, and Prague. He also proposed that Julius should ask Herr Bryde to accompany him, they would thus have mutual pleasure after their mutual trouble. Julius was delighted at the idea, and his mother, a very sensible woman—although she was somewhat blind in regard to her children, whom she considered super-excellent—also approved of the plan ; for Herr Bryde was certainly a very moral young man, and it was good for her Julius to have such a companion.

The proposal astonished Niels ; and he was somewhat perplexed what to reply ; it would be so very pleasant to go abroad ; but it would also be delightful to go back to Jutland, to his home on the heath. He had so long looked forward to this, and pictured to himself his return thither ; how much had he not to tell his friends there ! Moreover it had been settled that Herr Svane was to accompany him. Modestly, but with warmth, he expressed his thanks for the great pleasure offered to him, of which, he said, he regretted he could not avail himself. His refusal made Julius still more anxious that he should accompany him ; and the old grandfather suggested that Herr Bryde might sleep and wake upon it, before positively deciding against it.

Herr Svane at once said, "Go with him to Germany! accept an offer that won't be made to you every day. Perhaps you may never have another opportunity of seeing the world. Go, by all means! There will be a summer next year too, and the good old people over yonder will surely hold out beyond that time."

"Do not refuse so good an offer," wrote the kind old clergyman, Japetus Mollerup. "We all long to see you, my son, but it would be a proof of silly and selfish affection on our part were we not to wish you rather to put off till next year coming over to us, than to miss all the pleasure you will have in travelling abroad, and without being at a shilling's expense. There are always much knowledge and benefit to be derived from seeing foreign countries and customs: you can easily spare a month from your studies; when you return you will resume them with fresh vigour and increasing assiduity. Go, then, and God be with you!"

The little tour in Germany was therefore decided on. The students Arons and Bryde embarked in the steamer for Kiel; the mother and sisters of Julius, and some female friends, stood on Langelinie and waved their pocket-handkerchiefs. Herr Svane looked out from his garret window until he saw the last faint smoke from the steamer in the Kjöge roads. "Now it is beginning!" he exclaimed, meaning sea-sickness, for the sea was very rough outside. "Now it is

beginning," we say; and we are thinking of the new portion of the voyage of life on which he was entering.

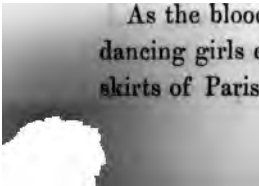
If good wishes and blessings could have made themselves visible in attendance on them, the two friends would have perceived a whole host from the peninsula of Jutland, from the Manse upon the heath; Bodil's and her mother's thoughts were always with them, and dwelling on the pleasure they would be enjoying; sometimes, too, they glanced for a moment at the dangers they might encounter on so long a journey. But they never dreamed of the *real* danger—the youthful temptations through which Niels must pass. It was not exactly—as he had once read and lectured upon—the Angel and the young Tobias who were upon their travels; but let us not be understood to say anything against Niels, nor yet against Julius Arons.

The fire at Hamburg had caused new and handsome houses to spring up round the new and old "Jungfernstieg." Our young friends put up at the hotel Victoria, and were charmed at the view from the window over the basin of the Alster, where light gondolas were rocking, and stately swans were swimming. The tones of music rang from the Alster pavilion, crowds of people streamed along outside: it was a delightful town, there were so much life, animation, and novelty there. They arrived at Hamburg about dusk, and immediately hurried out among the crowd; later in the evening they took their places at an open window,

with their cigars, and a glass of punch before each. The brilliant gas-lamps were reflected on the smooth, calm waters of the Alster basin; over near the wind-mill sparkled, in a little public garden, festoons of lamps and revolving lights; rockets and other fire-works arose and fell, as it were, in cascades of brilliant light.

“It is like a night in an eastern country!” said Niels, and Julius talked about beautiful hours, while his own black eyes brightened; he was himself of an eastern race, and very handsome; though still little more than a boy, the dark down was visible on his lip and chin; his eyebrows and hair were coal-black, his complexion was pink and delicate as that of a girl.

Hamburg was so splendid and pleasant a place, that they determined to remain there a few days. Julius had cousins there, his mother’s nephews, rich young Hamburgers; and next day these young men took them to the heights at Blankenese; they saw villas, and a fishing village, which reminded them of the fishing hamlets in Zealand. Large ships were passing up and down the dark waters of the Elbe, and in the distance were descried the heath-clad hills of Hanover. Another kingdom thus lay before them,—and such always makes a strong impression during one’s first tour.



As the blood runs riot in the veins while seeing the dancing girls exhibit in Indian temples, or in the outskirts of Paris while grisettes and students are whirl-

ing in voluptuous mazes, so the same sort of excitement pervades a certain place in Hamburg, to which we must follow our young friends. "Oh! even the knights of Malta would not have scrupled to enter here!" exclaimed one of the young cousins, when Niels started back on observing the words: "DANCING SALOON."

"When one is travelling, one ought to see the characteristics of every town," he said to himself, while he followed his companions without further demur.

It was a large, splendid hall; gas-lamps were blazing; half-naked females in elegant attire, and fashionably-dressed young gentlemen, and old ones too, they saw around them; but Bacchanalian orgies were scarcely concealed by the thin veil of ball-room etiquette. The cousins entered immediately into the spirit of the evening; Julius also seemed quite at home, Niels on the contrary stood still, contemplating the scene, but what he thought of it could not have been guessed by the expression of his countenance—he felt no sympathy or participation in the gaiety before him, but looked on coldly, and with a sensation of proud self-satisfaction. A smile played around his lips, in his heart seemed to be engraved these pharisaical words,—

"God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are!"



Who knows himself, who knows the hidden springs in his own heart !

It was late at night when the friends returned to their hotel. Julius was like an open book, and if it were not just what Bodil of the heath would have called a good book, it was in a flowing, exuberant style, and the youthful open-heartedness which was apparent in it, had something that gave it an insinuating, attractive power. What experience had Herr Julius not already acquired—experience gained even during his last school years in Copenhagen ! Poor minister's wife at the heath ! How horrified you would have been at the friend and his mentor, so young, so handsome, and yet "so shockingly versed in evil" as *he* was, with whom your Niels now associated, from whom he did not turn away, to whom he listened, and whom he did not lecture on sin and ungodliness ! What was going on in the heart of Niels ? There was rushing through it a strange whirlwind of thoughts ; he seemed to have looked, in a few hours, further into the world, deeper into other people and into himself, than he had done in all his former years ; his blood seemed to tingle from his strong emotions ; the day had dawned before he fell asleep.

And now we must leave Hamburg, and take the road to the Harz Mountains ; there, amidst pine and birch trees, where the river precipitates itself over masses of rock, we must follow our travellers—high

up yonder, where in former times the Druid-priests chaunted around the holy fire, and the heathen worshippers danced and held their pagan rites,—the witches' Sabbath to the believing Christians.

From the Brocken, in charming weather, they beheld the glorious sun arise, that golden orb in the east, which some races of mankind have worshipped as God himself. The whole extent of country below them seemed like a sea of skies, but as the sun rose higher and higher, they beheld the picture-like features of the landscape slowly emerging from the blue mist; first came a hill-top, then dark woods, then meadows and fields, until all lay in vivid distinctness, smiling as freshly as if created that fragrant morning, to mark a festive day in nature. This lovely morning hour seemed to elevate the mind, as a hymn in church elevates the thoughts of the pious. The travellers both felt this, they spoke of it, but their conversation was not so flowing as in the chapter touching Hamburg, it was also shorter, and ended with—a good appetite.

The two got on exceeding well together, there was much good in Julius, and his friend saw and admitted this; he was so kind-hearted, so charitable, that he would give his last morsel to the poor, and he was the zealous defender of any one he thought unjustly accused; in fact, he was what people call “a fine young man,” so chivalrous, and with so much frankness in his manners, and, we should be forced to con-

fess if the worthy mistress of the Jutland Manse asked us, a dangerous companion for Niels, seeing that it behoved *him* to take the Gospel for his guide. But be not afraid, good lady, your prayers and pious wishes hover like invisible angels around him, and they may conquer.

The three Madonnas in the gallery of paintings at Dresden, Raphael's, Holbein's and Murillo's, caused a good deal of argument between the friends. Niels declared that the youthful figure of the Virgin Mary, floating on the clouds, as Raphael had portrayed her, was the loveliest of them all ; and next to it, the countenance of the infant Jesus, with its earnest, speaking eyes, in which lay a world of expression ; the holy looks of the pious saints, and, still more, the matchless beauty of the cherubs—nothing finer could be conceived ! Holbein's Madonna looked like a middle-aged, worthy German dame, Murillo's only depicted a lovely young mother.

Julius reversed the order for the three.

Raphael's, he thought, was disappearing in the clouds ; Holbein's looked too conscious of her own importance ; but Murillo's was a woman—a charming woman ! and he pronounced his opinions, as many have done, and as many more will. Hamburg, the Brocken, the Madonnas, and, we must add, the railway journey, the first they had ever made in their lives, were the principal points of interest in their tour, that is to say, what their minds dwelt on most in remem-

brance. If, however, we could copy Niels Bryde's journal, and what Julius called his "observations," we should find the whole of the Saxon Switzerland, along with Prague and Berlin, but they could only repeat the same strains as we heard at Hamburg—on the Brocken, and before the Madonnas.

We are again with the friends in Copenhagen ; the pastor's wife has got back, to his native country, her beloved Niels, unscathed by the dangers and fascinations of the world. He was again in Sværte Street, at Madam Jensen's, and she was obliged to wake him herself the first morning, because, as she said, Ane Sophie, the servant girl, had been confined to bed since the day before—it was a disease of the heart ; she was betrothed to the servant lad on the ground-floor, and he could not leave his place till Easter. One could then have love affairs even in Sværte Street !

Niels Bryde was a frequent visitor at the house of the Arons family. "Is it to be Rebecca or Amalie?" inquired Herr Svane ; "you must really tell me when you have made up your mind, or I will pester you with the question every day."

"Is it the eldest or the middle one?" asked several of his college companions.

"We have heard the news," said Madam Jensen. "They are charming girls, and can easily be baptized. They will have plenty of money!"

Little did all these people know Niels Bryde ; he had no tender passions. Science, especially natural

philosophy and astronomy, interested him, and occupied his thoughts more than any young girl. He studied theology diligently, that would lead to the goal to which his adopted parents looked forward with so much pleasure. But in his way of thinking, a change had taken place: the free opinions of modern days, and the free mode of expressing them, were continually undermining, one after the other, the ideas and notions which had grown with him at his home on the heath. He excelled in conversation, therefore he was seldom a silent auditor at the meetings of the students, when, with their cigars in their mouths, they discussed politics and spiritual matters.

He had also become the possessor of a dog. A couple of pretty whelps had been brought into the world in Herr Arons' house; Julius took one, Niels the other. "Hvapsen! little Hvaps!" said Esther, patting the lively little *whelp*; she had changed that word into Hvaps.

"He shall be called that!" said Niels.

Rebecca proposed rather the name "Sappho," after the Grecian poetess; but, as the whelp was a gentleman, and not a lady, he retained his name of *Hvaps*. By-and-by we shall hear more about him.

Almost every night, till near the break of day, Niels Bryde sat over his books. It was necessary he should do so, if he were ever to distinguish himself; for there was so much of what is called worldly pleasure, that drew him away from them; besides his college friends

and general society, there were concerts and the theatre to visit; the money he made by a few pupils did not meet his extra expenses, so, as he was very conscientious, he had to give lessons for a couple of more hours during the day, and devote the hours of night to his own reading.

"You may think it very wise, but it is downright folly to do this," said Herr Svane. "You take the night to study, I used to take it to drive about; my passion formerly was to roam about the streets of Copenhagen at night."

"And what pleasure could you find in that?" asked Niels.

"Oh! to drive about the streets between midnight and early morning was something quite original as a whim, and whim was my hobby in those days. Now I prefer lying comfortably in my bed. At that time I took fancies about the streets. Storm Street always reminded me of the rolling of drums, the din of battle, &c., &c. How much sorrow I felt sure existed in Hyskenstrøede, where the middle-aged German shopmen lived; they never married, but lived frugally and poorly. Often did I think that Cupid himself lived in that street, for Cupid was a bachelor as far as I knew. In the story of Psyche there is no mention of a priest; yes, I often thought of Love in Hyskenstrøede!"

And there was more truth in what he said than

Niels thought. Hyskenstræde had once actually been for Herr Svane the scene of hopes and sorrows; *that* was now his secret; and who has not a secret! Niels Bryde had one at that moment, it was that he was reading Feuerbach's "Ueber Philosophie und Christenthum."

In the approaching summer his dear adopted parents and Bodil were to receive his long-promised visit; the healthy, regular life, and fresh country air would do him good; the gun should again be made serviceable; the exciting pleasures of the chase again enjoyed; Herr Svane would go with him—it was an old agreement.

But when the time to commence the journey arrived, Herr Svane was in one of his dark humours, and preferred, as he declared, remaining in his own den.

"I won't let you off," said Niels. "The voyage and all the novelty over there will put you in good spirits. You who are so susceptible of the sunshine of life."

"And never know it in reality!" he replied. "My dwelling is not on the sunny side in the world! With me it is as with certain houses which are so placed in a street that they never have any sunshine except by reflection; it only glances on them from their neighbours' white houses and shining glass window-panes; from these gleam a brighter day, a sort of painted sunshine, without warmth, into the chambers. That is

now my fate, yet it is ridiculous enough, how often I can imagine that I dwell upon the sunny side."

Niels Bryde soon found that there was nothing for it but to go alone—but no—Hvaps accompanied him; little did the animal know what was to befall him, and what a master he had !

The weather was fine; the sea, if not as placid as a lake, was not rough, but there was a fresh wind, and the current caused a little motion. Two or three ladies, with one gentleman of their party, sat with half-closed eyes, and complained of the rocking of the steamer and the "high waves," as they called them, and were quite sure that they would soon become higher, and that there would be a storm—they had already found out how ill people can be on the wild ocean.

The Painter, the Genius "on the shoulders," was also on board; he began to hold forth in the same interesting strain that he had done at Herr Meibum's. He defined Genius. "What was it? Froth! Genius is what few have. A peculiar possession, which cannot be lent; which"—he turned very pale, and became sick and silent. He and Niels Bryde did not open their mouths to each other the rest of the way.

When passing Samsö, Hvaps fell overboard; Niels perceived this, and begged the steersman and the captain to stop the steamer, it was his dear dog, and it would be drowned. Hvaps was then swimming close by.



"We cannot stop the ship for the sake of a dog," was their reply.

"But you can for the sake of a man!" cried Niels Bryde angrily, and in a moment he had sprung overboard, and was swimming towards his dog.

The ship was now stopped, and, dripping with water, they were both taken on board.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE NEW MONTANUS.

THERE was great joy at the Manse ; from the drawing-room to the kitchen it rang—"Our son is coming home again !" It was Niels' first visit since he had gone to Copenhagen to become a student.

"Now he is packing up," said the good mother, the evening before he was to embark. "Now he is rejoicing ! Ah, well ! he won't get much rest to-night ! What if he should oversleep himself in the morning, and lose his passage ! But they will surely call him in time !" *She* could have called him in time, for she was right early awake, thinking of him, and praying for him. The clock struck six ; she seized her husband by the arm, and woke him up. "How can you sleep !" she exclaimed ; "the ship is sailing now."

"What ship ?" said the clergyman, starting up.

"Why the steamer to be sure. Our Niels is now on his way from Copenhagen."

Her thoughts were only with him. The whole day she accompanied him in imagination on his voyage and subsequent journey, yet she was busy both in the par-

lour and the kitchen. Bodil was equally delighted at his return home, but she did not speak so much about it. Flowers from the heath she had brought to adorn his room, and all the little treasures of his childhood were displayed in their old places; her own new Bible she had laid upon the table.

It became late in the evening—very late; “but it was a good long way for the horses to come,” said the minister; “Niels could scarcely arrive before eleven o’clock.” Soon after the sound of carriage-wheels was heard—the watch-dog barked—and Niels Bryde was once more in the home of his childhood. Then came embraces, questions, narratives. It was midnight already. The old gentleman retired to his couch, and advised the rest of the party to do the same, as Niels must be very tired.

The next day was quite a festival day—they would all be such! Around him was nothing but peace, happiness, and love. Niels felt himself almost bewildered by the affection with which he was received, and his heart throbbed with pleasure when he glanced at the dear eyes which gazed on him with so much delight. It appeared to him as if only a rich dream lay between the past and the present time; all here was so unchanged: but he was changed—in development of mind, in freedom of thought, in knowledge of the world he had advanced much. All tending to good, he hoped.

Bodil had never been to Copenhagen; to her that

place had always seemed one of the greatest cities in the world, until Niels' letters from Hamburg, Dresden, and Berlin arrived ; but her ideas still dwelt with most pleasure on the metropolis of Denmark. How much he had to tell her about student-life, the theatres, society—especially the luxury that was to be found at the merchant's house. Bodil saw in Rebecca and Amalie, from his description of them, true women of the world. She felt most interested in "the child,"—the quiet, studious little Esther.

The contrast seemed very great to Niels between the stirring scenes and numerous associates he had so recently left in Copenhagen, and the quiet and seclusion of the Jutland heath. The change from the one to the other had been so very sudden, and could not have been accomplished so speedily but for the power of steam. Remarking upon this led the conversation to steam-boats, railroads, electro-magnetism, and the many wonderful powers with which we are now all familiar, but which were there at that time in their infancy.

"These are the miracles of modern days!" exclaimed Niels.

"Do you call them such?" cried old Japetus; "but they are only the work of man! Do not bestow a holy title on them."

"How far will mankind carry all this?" said Bodil, "and to what will it all lead?"

"When the first balloon appeared, it was also asked, 'Of what use will it be?' and Franklin answered the question with another, 'Of what use may the new-born babe become?' Mankind advances in our time with giant strides; in every thousand years there comes a century, in which is distinctly to be observed a vast onward movement—in such a century we live."

Thus in the quiet hours, while they sat in the lonely Manse, Niels Bryde became a true apostle of knowledge; he spread out before them the map of nature from the spider's flimsy web up to the hosts of stars that gem the sky; he explained the various new projects, some of them already carried out, in which man would almost seem to tread upon the territory of the Creator; he spoke of balloons, Daguerreotypes, photographs; showed God in nature, without actually using that expression—God's grandeur he called it. He conversed with much animation, and he was not deficient in eloquence; he felt that he could express his thoughts without reserve, and the little circle who listened to them of course required nothing else.

"You have come home almost a second Erasmus Montanus!" said Japetus Mollerup.

"But here on the heath, people do not believe as 'upon the hill,' that the earth is flat," he replied; "they are wiser, they would not let Montanus suffer wrongfully. I look upon it as a tragedy, that Hol-

berg-like comedy, that misjudging of those by whom he was surrounded; and the most tragic part is, that he was at last obliged to bow before ignorance, and murder truth by admitting that the earth was flat! After this admission one can only think of him as a poor wretch, and can take no more interest in him. The tragic then only remains in the spectacle thus given of the world's stupidity."

"You might just have done the same, Niels, had you been in his place," said Japetus Mollerup.

"No, he would not!" said Bodil, with a degree of warmth which was not displeasing to her brother.

"No!" he added, laughing, "truth is God, and one should not give it up for any price. Our strength lies in our will."

And Niels had a will.

"May not the active development of the times lead to placing too much dependance on the material world?" said Japetus Mollerup, after he had been apparently buried for a few minutes in reflection; "all is done now only for worldly utility. Everything is carried on by machinery. A restlessness, a disquiet has taken possession of mankind, which makes them to be continually looking on external matters, instead of ever turning their thoughts inwardly for self examination."

"The poetry of life will be banished," said Bodil.

"On the contrary, it will come forth under new forms," replied Niels; "and we are every day tending

to that. National poetry will always be valued. Here in the north this is especially seen in the case of Æhlenschläger, though he is not northern enough; Grundtvig is more so, but he wants Æhlenschläger's creative spirit. This last-named poet has not, however, moulded all his characters out of the Sagas' marble blocks; had he done this, perhaps he would not either have made such a favourable impression upon the multitude, for whom freer times have greater charms. His tragedies are no more northern, than Orientalists would find his Aladdin oriental.

Bodil looked with surprise and displeasure at her brother, that he could so boldly, and with so much decision dare to utter such opinions respecting a poet whom she, and every one in the kingdom, regarded with admiration, affection, and gratitude! Were *these* the sentiments of the youth of the present day?

"Our present times demand another style of poetical composition, than the peculiarly Northern," replied Niels: "the old Gods are dead; the heathen and the heroic ages are past; their times are not ours, and our poets should seek in their creations to paint for us with all the force of spirit and truth, the age in which we live. When we read the old Sagas, they unroll for us the annals of bygone pagan days, but their heroes appear somewhat differently from what they do in the fancied description of our modern Scalds; these take but the old armour, or garb, and equip their own contemporaries in it;

it is our language they speak, with a slight sprinkling of the old idioms; we think we see the old Gods and heroes and ancient times—

‘Better, grander, it may be,  
But ah! it is not them we see!’

Genius can, indeed, portray a character whose interest shall be imperishable: this Shakespeare has done in his Hamlet; but that was not a creation from yon almost fabulous days. Hamlet is nearer than the Sagas. If the heroes and beauties of the olden time could see themselves as represented in our tragedies they would not know themselves, any more than the grandees who are personated by puppets in our hand-organs could recognise themselves.”

However much there was of singularity and of youthful presumption in the criticism, old Japetus Mollerup had listened to it with interest; it was Niels who had been speaking, and he was pleased to find that he could express his ideas so well. Old people are generally pleased with what they fancy the superiority of those they have brought up. It is a tribute to themselves.

In Bodil’s mind, though she did not say anything of it, there were some misgivings awakened in regard to poetry; she had formed opinions of her own, but she was a good deal struck with what Niels said, and listened with attention to it.



In the evening the skies were extremely clear, and innumerable stars shone in the expansive vault of heaven. Bodil stood with her brother at an open door leading to the garden, and the bright firmament above with its hosts of worlds afforded subject for their conversation. It might have been supposed that Niels Bryde was most anxious to show off his knowledge: perhaps he was so to a certain extent, but it must also be allowed that he was penetrated and excited by all the glories he had heard and read so much about.

"What Infinity!" exclaimed Bodil.

"Greater than thought can grasp!" said Niels. "Call to mind the swallow's flight, and think that the stormy wind rushes faster than it, and that the sound of our voices travels again twenty times faster than the wind; and what is that to the movement of our earth, which revolves yet ninety times faster around the sun! But two thousand times faster still descend the rays of the sun to us. A cannon-ball, always in equal motion, would take twenty-five years to come from the sun to the earth, yet a ray of the sun reaches us in eight minutes!"

"How is that known?" asked Bodil, involuntarily clasping her hands. "Who could measure the distance—who could count the minutes?"

"The mind of man!" replied her brother. "The mind is nearer us than those four stars you see shining

yonder ; one of their rays would take about seven years on its way down to us. The most distant star in the milky way is five hundred times further off than the nearest, and light, which, as I tell you, travels forty-two thousand miles in a second, takes from the furthest star our telescopes can discover, fifteen hundred years to reach us."

Bodil drooped her head, and seemed overcome by the magnitude of the subject ; but her brother's eye kindled, and his voice became clearer and more sonorous.

"A thousand years must elapse before light can arrive from one extremity of the milky way to the other, and there are astronomers who affirm that in the visible heavens there are many milky ways, whose light would take more than a million of years on its passage to us ; and remember what I mentioned respecting the rapidity of light—forty-two thousand miles in a second !"

"I cannot imagine it ! The infinity appears to me inconceivable — inconceivable like God ! How grand ! How magnificent !—and yet it causes me a sensation of dread, for how must I dwindle into nothingness,—I, who am only an atom of dust in the eye of that God who lives and moves amidst this boundless space !"

Venus was the only planet Bodil knew and could find ; her brother told her that it was also the only

planet which seemed to have been known to the ancients, and that Homer had celebrated it in song. He told her of its clear, transparent atmosphere, its hills that were six times higher than earth's highest mountains, Dhawalagiri and Chimborazo, described how long and how brightly the summits of the hills up there must shine, until our earth arose, which is a nine times larger, and nine times more brilliant evening star to Venus than it is to us. "And therefore, probably, their poets up yonder call our globe a land of light!"

He pointed out Jupiter to her, which looks so small to us, and yet is the largest of all the planets; he told her that its atmosphere is like the earth's liquid masses, its skies solid substances, and that whilst the four seasons there are as long as three of our years, its rotation is only two hours.

Bodil listened as children listen to fairy tales, but with entire belief—though she could not realise all this immensity, this vast infinity. Why might not, upon these globes, God's creation be different from us? Even this idea was fraught with wonder. She heard that, whilst in the planet Mercury light and heat were seven times greater than on our earth, everything in Uranus, even the air, was always under our freezing point; that the clearest noonday hour there is scarcely as light as our starry nights; at a distance of four hundred millions of miles from the sun does it revolve

in the heavens, surrounded by its satellites and a ring, shining in appearance to us, but dark to the inhabitants of that world.

"All this has been minutely examined, and is accurately calculated !"

"And living beings everywhere !" exclaimed Bodil, almost giddy with the thought. "Beings in the image of God !"

"There is life in a drop of water," said her brother. "And that in these vast heavenly bodies there should be nothing living, that nothing with a spiritual essence should exist there, is not to be believed ! But what they are, that is beyond our ken. We only know that the beings who dwell in these worlds must be very differently organised from ourselves, especially those in the comets. Their path lies now, so close to the sun, that heat becomes in them some thousand times stronger than in glowing hot iron with us, and now they are so far from the sun, that the comet's atmosphere is as cold as ice itself. What inhabitants of our earth would be able to withstand such changes ; what eyes, constituted as ours are, could endure such a flood of light, to be succeeded by such black gloom, that our darkest nights compared to it would seem like twilight ?"

"And at some period such a comet must come in contact with our earth !" exclaimed Bodil ; "and that will be the judgment day !" She stopped suddenly, then added, in a moment, "Does not the Bible foretell

this ? But whence shall it come, and how ? Does man also know that ?”

“They know it from Him who created them, who rules his creations, and lays down laws that sound even from dead bodies. Thus far, but no further. That law pervades all. Quick as thought, though the comet’s course may be, it will recede from the atmospheres which surround other globes. The old belief that there are monsters in the air, as there are whales and sea-serpents in the ocean, is exploded. Astronomy has discovered the comet’s paths—beholds them in their vaporous envelopment, which they lose as they approach the sun, and which then adheres to them as a luminous train.”

“Were I a man,” cried Bodil, “I think I should become crazy in my search after knowledge ; and there is no science so grand, so glorious, as astronomy ! How happy you are to be able to study it !” she added.

“That, however, is not the knowledge for which I thirst,” replied her brother gravely ; and there was something of sadness in his tones.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE IDIOT CHILD—"BARESKE ALAKO."

BODIL and Niels were crossing the heath together towards the low copse-wood, Hvaps, with his glossy brown coat, and light as a deer, was gambolling around them, rejoiced at being their companion; such said his speaking hazel eyes and the wagging of his tail, which is so useful an appendage to dogs in expressing their emotions.

"A beautiful dog he is!" said Niels Bryde, "and was I to have let him die, become food for the fishes! No, no, he shall jump about and amuse himself a little longer in this bright world."

"His life might have cost us yours, though! Springing as you did into the sea, you might have been lost under the paddles of the steamer."

"No, I sprang out behind them; I can very well sustain myself a quarter of an hour in a calm sea such as that was; I knew they would not let a man drown; they dared not—at such a moment one does not reflect—one acts; and I was determined to save Hvaps."

"How much sense dogs seem to possess, more really than some human beings ! It is strange to think that such a creature is only to exist in this life. It feels gratitude and affection, and has many good qualities ; all this is more than mere instinct !"

"Who promises and assures you more immortality than that dog ?" asked her brother, with a smile.

"My undying soul does ! Religion and the Bible do !"

"And you are firm in your belief ?"

"I have never doubted. I am certain that I shall rise again from the dead."

"As what ? That is the question. In this world all go into the earth and come forth under new forms, but not as you picture to yourself ; no, far otherwise ! There is an endless circulation going on. Chemistry shows us that the same materials are to be found in all created things, and that these, in their compositions, manifest this power, and become either a stone, a plant, or an animal, which, when it has fulfilled its destination here, is dissolved and returns its matter again."

"And the soul returns to God who gave it," said Bodil. "Your great learning cannot overthrow truth."

"It is an arrogance peculiar to us men to determine that we shall surely live for ever, and endowed with thought and intelligence. What right have we to this endless life ? Is it due to our wisdom—to our superiority ? Remember the ant-hill ! You yourself

gave me the first lesson about the wisdom of these small insects, and that the little hillock was not a clump of earth without plan and use. And look at the bees ; did they not know, long before mathematics were dreamed of, that the hexagon is the form which, being added together, takes the least room ; and have they not always thus built their thousands of cells ?”

Bodil looked earnestly at him. “You are right, and yet not quite right. The animals were endowed from their creation with all those instincts which, during their short lives, would contribute to their good here ; mankind, on the contrary, increases in knowledge from century to century.”

“How high do you suppose we soar above the Egyptians and the Indians ?” said her brother. “We have all the same wants as the animals, are all composed of the same materials.”

“Oh, you and your materials ! You would turn us into mere machines ! You say things that you do not mean ; you want, with your vast learning, to show how much superior you are to me ; but in our *faith*, I hope we stand as equals.”

“In that you stand higher than I do ; nay, higher than truth—you wander into the realms of superstition !” So saying, he stopped and looked about him.

Hvaps pricked up his ears, held in his breath, and, bounding away to a little hillock formed of uprooted heather, he barked loudly. They approached the



place, and, strangely enough, the last word Niels Bryde had pronounced, "superstition," might, for any others than the two in question, have easily at that moment exerted its influence.

In a sort of nest in the ground lay or stood an extraordinary-looking imp, in a blue garment; a tattered red handkerchief was bound round its waist, and a red "Nix's cap" was on its large, ill-shapen head; small dark eyes glared from a reddish-brown face, around which the black hair hung in matted heaps: the creature uttered a discordant cry.

"What is it?" exclaimed Niels Bryde.

"Can it be a human being?" said Bodil.

"Yes! a bit of a man!" replied a voice, close by. "It is my little knaspert,\* sölle veivan!"† and up from amidst the broom and the bushes arose, with apparent difficulty, a tall, large-boned woman. Niels recollected her; it was the gipsy with her idiot child; the poor wasted mockery of a human being she had laid in a hole amidst the turf and heather, while she "parched a little corn." She had been stung in her foot by some vicious reptile; the part had swelled, and was very painful; she had put wet earth round it, which she fancied would do it good, but there was a sickly look in her brown face, and an expression of suffering in her eyes; and when she tried to walk, her swollen foot seemed incapable of bearing her.

\* Boy.

† Friend.

"You cannot remain here upon the heath," said Niels Bryde; "come to the Manse; to be sure it is a long way for you to go, but we will assist you."

She said she had spent many a night among the heather; but she began, when she observed their sympathy, to speak more in the dialect of the country, without interlarding it so much with her own language. Within doors or without were much the same to her in general, she gave them to understand; but at present she would prefer to be under shelter, as the cold attacked her limbs so much.

"Can the child walk?" asked Niels Bryde.

"Alas!" said the woman, "he is worse off than myself! He is mulo\* in the feet; he will never recover the use of them; I must be his legs. I am used to this."

The woman could scarcely support herself, much less carry the boy; nevertheless she begged them to fasten her "knaspert" upon her back, and said she would try to hobble after them; it would be dry in the barn, and she would sleep comfortably there; she perceived that there would be a heavy fall of rain in the night.

It was impossible for her to carry the child, so Niels Bryde took him up in his arms.

"He is very heavy," said he.

"There is plenty of stuff in him," said the woman, though he is but small for a boy of ten years old."

\* Dead.

His body was no larger than that of a child of four years of age. The idiot boy fixed his dark, glittering eyes upon Niels, and perceiving that he was not going to hurt him, he closed them, and fell asleep.

The woman limped on as well as she could, but at a little distance from the house she dropped down, incapable of going any further. Bodil ran on to procure assistance, and to order vinegar-and-water ; the woman was taken to a room near the stables, in which harnesses were kept, an old feather bed was laid under her, her foot was bathed and bandaged up, and this Samaritan work being finished, one of the servant girls set about feeding the child, who was supplied with stirabout and milk—he could not feed himself—and when all this was done, the brother and sister left the room and its humble occupants.

It happened that on the following day the musician Grethe came to the Manse, and, like the Troubadours of Provence, she brought her harmonica with her ; she also brought her second cousin, “little Karen,” who had got an excellent place at the Judge’s house, where she had at first taken service as a mere child. In her childish days Karen had been quite a romp, but she had become by degrees very sedate—latterly, indeed, almost melancholy. Sadness does not belong to youth, and would soon pass off. In order to enliven her she was sent away for a holiday, and came with her relative to the Manse. Everybody liked little Karen ; but chatty or merry she never was.

They went to see the suffering gipsy woman ; while Karen fed the helpless child, Grethe took up her harmonica, and played on it. The music seemed to please the boy ; he looked much surprised, smiled, and uttered a kind of joyful chuckle.

"He laughs, my Grumsling !" cried the gipsy. "There is a wonderful sound in that tjeiko.\* Where did you get it ?"

"I have had it for many years ; it was a heritage. It is my comfort and delight ; I can even amuse myself with this when I am ill in bed. Perhaps it may also amuse you," she added ; and she played several airs. One might certainly have been tempted to believe that there truly lay virtue in its tones. The gipsy woman became more talkative and lively ; and old Grethe was charmed with the good effect of her instrument. "It can be heard far away on the heath ; it is like a kind friend that can speak pleasantly to me. You don't speak half so much, little Karen," she said, turning, in jest, to her young cousin. "You are too grave ; it is not right. We will have something gay now." And she played a lively air.

Some time after, the gipsy came limping into the kitchen ; the swelling in her foot had gone down ; the fever had left her. The servants spoke to her about the wandering, idle life she led, and of the changeling she carried about with her. "He was nothing but an elf," they said, "put in place of her child."

\* Article ; thing.

"He has his father's eyes!" cried the woman, in a language they could understand. She then told them that she intended to leave the country soon, to meet her husband, who, like herself, was of the pure blood. In Bohemia and Wallachia he had been a great chief, and had several people under his command—many more than any nobleman in Jutland; but he was put in prison, for no fault, in Austria, while she and her sick "knaspert" came to the north, where she was born on the border of the woods near Ma-Krokone. Yes, she had been here before, and she knew the language.

All listened to her eagerly; the dairy-maid expressed the horror she would feel in roving about like a wild bird, without a roof over her head; and the musician Grethe played a song she knew, about "a castle in Austria," which made the gipsy almost frantic.

Little Karen was obliged to go away early, in order to be at home in good time, and old Grethe determined to accompany her part of the way. She looked for her harmonica, which she had laid upon a shelf between two large earthenware jars, but it was no longer there.

"I have not got it," said the gipsy woman, you may search me!" and she lifted her garments somewhat high, to the dismay of the servant girls.

"It must have been put out of the way for safety's sake," said Niels Bryde, and every corner was searched in vain.

Little Karen became as pale as a corpse and quite ill—poor Grethe had more than one trouble on her hands. Karen, however, soon recovered, but the harmonica was not found.

At the dawn of day the gipsy took her departure with her Grumsling, she passed the musician Grethe's house; the poor woman had not slept the whole night, she missed so much her dearest treasure, it was life to her as well as bread. She stood in her doorway, and looking at the gipsy, she cried, in a voice trembling with emotion—"Did you take it? Oh give it back to me! It is my child—my only comfort. I played it to amuse your little one, and to soothe you. Act like a Christian to me—do not carry away the only thing I value!"

The gipsy looked at her with a sort of grin. Though she was but a puro, \* she said, it was not her habit to purra. † She placed the child on the ground, raised herself to her height, and swore, that if the stolen article were found upon her, she was willing to rot in snurren. ‡ She would not hold the child while she took the oath.

When she had reached a good way over the heath, she sat herself down, and unloosed the idiot child's legs which had been bound up together, along with an article wrapped up in a piece of rag; she drew this forth, looked sharply over the heath on all sides, smiled, and taking off the tattered covering, held up

\* Old crone.

† Steal.

‡ Jail.

the harmonica ! It had *not* been about her, but fastened to the child, and where no one would think of looking—wrapped up with its withered legs. She touched the harmonica, it gave a sound that startled her for a moment—she soon, however, drew better tones from it, she laughed, and the child looked pleased. She kissed her child, and played again for him ; but looking up suddenly she saw Hvaps, the dog, standing beside her, with his eyes fixed on her. In a moment she had hid the harmonica in the long heather, pretending to play the flute with her mouth, and commenced a sort of song that she thought resembled the tones of the harmonica ; she plucked a few stalks of the heather, to mark the place where she had deposited the instrument, higher and higher she raised her voice—looked around to see if any one were approaching, and soon perceived Niels Bryde, who had left the Manse even earlier than she had done, as he was going out for a day's sport. He approached her, and she recommenced her imitation of the harmonica.

“ We are playing upon that instrument,” she said as Niels stood before her—“ Was it not so it sounded ? ”

“ A little better,” he replied ; “ where have you put it ? ” “ Where is the stolen treasure ? ”

“ Poor me ! ” she exclaimed. “ Why should a miserable creature like me accuse myself unjustly ? you will find nothing ? ” That was all he could understand of her harangue, for she soon fell into her unknown language. She attempted to pat Hvaps, but he

growled and moved away from her. Niels gave the dog a sign to find and bring the hidden instrument, and he immediately began to sniff about.

"You deserve a good sound flogging, you vile creature?" cried Niels, "is it thus you repay hospitality? do you not know that you have taken what is much more valuable than a lamb or a goose? for that you *have* taken the harmonica I am convinced—a poor aged woman's dearest possession, her only means of support! It is here! I heard it sound, you imitated it badly! and look yonder, Hvaps is searching among the heather—he will show us the stolen treasure."

The harmonica was found. A push against the gipsy's shoulder, and a scornful "Begone!" was all the punishment he bestowed on her, with these additional words—

"Never make your appearance again at the Manse, while *I* am there—or you shall have a taste of my riding whip. The minister himself is not to be trifled with, and the magistrate does not live very far from us."

The gipsy grinned, and fixed her dark wild eyes disdainfully on him, but she did not utter a word. That sneering smile, however, and that look provoked Niels Bryde. .

"You laugh!" he cried; "take care! I shall teach you what it is to take away a poor person's only treasure."



No one could take anything from her, she said, with a look of scornful defiance ; she had nothing that he or anybody could deprive her of.

Niels understood what she said. A sudden thought struck him.

"The dearest and best you have—your only treasure I will take !" and he seized her child, took it up in his arms, threw his gun over his shoulder, and started.

"My *Grumsling* !" shrieked the woman, and she stretched out her hands, endeavouring to get back her child. He pushed her off, she cast on him a look like that of an angry wild bird on finding itself made captive, and muttered in a hoarse voice,—

"*Rakk dero !*" \* Her eyes and Niels Bryde's met, it seemed as if they understood each other's inflexible character. She threw herself on the ground, and boiling with anger, he strode away. The unconscious child laid his head heavily on his shoulder.

When he had proceeded a little way, his burden became rather oppressive, he stopped, and looked round—no gipsy was to be seen—nothing but the wide, solitary heath ! What could have become of her—was she there still, or had she gone further off ? Had he erred in supposing that she would on no account give up her child, but would soon come to reclaim it ? Was she going to resign his little captive

\* "Take care !"

to him ? It was a nice present of game to bring home truly ! He looked at the "*Grumsling*," which at that moment opened its dark glassy eyes and fixed them on him. He then remembered his horrid dream, how this hobgoblin had, in it, encircled him with its bat-like wings, and almost squeezed him to death. He shuddered. He gazed with horror and disgust on the creature under whose weight he was toiling along. He was about to put his burden down, but the reflection that this was just what the mother expected, prevented him from doing so. He was resolved to conquer his disagreeable feelings, and not let himself be influenced by a mere dream. She would surely come by-and-by—her maternal love would compel her to follow him ! He went quickly on, and soon reached the garden of the Manse.

Bodil was just going out by the little wicket-gate, and gazed with amazement and dismay at her brother ; he explained the circumstances to her, and after she had sighed at his impetuosity, she smiled and shook hands with him. Bodil thought, as he did, that the gipsy woman would come for her child, but she added, "I hope she may not come during the night, and do some mischief here at the Manse. She belongs to a revengeful, evil-minded race. We must be on our guard." She determined not to mention the matter immediately to her parents.

"You do not surely suppose that the woman would think of setting fire to the Manse ?" exclaimed Niels.

"We are in the hands of God!" replied Bodil, though with a degree of uneasiness, which she did not express, she carried the idiot child to her own room.

Hour after hour passed, but no gipsy made her appearance. After dinner Bodil confided the affair to her mother, who was very much vexed that Niels should have brought such bad luck upon the house. The cows would no longer be allowed to give milk; the horses would get the staggers and the glanders; and as to the family themselves, indeed, every one at the Manse, it was frightful to think what might not happen.

Bodil had to employ all her eloquence, to quote passages from the Bible, and finally to assure her mother of her own and Niels' conviction that the gipsy would not desert her child.

At length the good lady, who never placed her own opinion in opposition to those of her husband and children, allowed herself to be somewhat comforted, and promised not to say a word yet of the matter to the clergyman or to any one else at the Manse.

Niels regretted that he had been so carried away by his impetuosity; but he would not admit this to any one. He haunted the garden, spying about in all corners; Bodil undertook to convey the harmonica back to old Grethe, and set off to her house, for this purpose, in the afternoon.

The door was locked; no sound was heard inside, it seemed as if all there were still as death. Bodil

knocked, but no one answered. She then took the harmonica, and played a few notes on it, under the window. Louder and louder she played, at last she saw a face at the window. It was Grethe, who, as she said, had thrown herself on her bed in her grief. Her joy at recovering her beloved instrument was great; she kissed it again and again.

“My little singing-bird, my own harmonica! Oh, young lady, how happy you have made a poor old woman! Where was it? who found it?”

And Bodil told her that the gipsy had stolen it, and that Niels had taken it from her on the heath.

It was late at night, all the people at the Manse were in bed, and yet nothing had been seen or heard of the gipsy woman. Was it possible that she could really be glad to get rid of her burden? The “Grum-sling” had eaten and drank plentifully; he was now asleep, and was snoring frightfully, with a sort of rattle in his throat, in poor Bodil’s chamber. It was a very disagreeable occurrence altogether; what would the night bring?

Imagination triumphed over Neils’ sober-mindedness for a moment, as completely as the phantom of his dream had overcome him; but he soon recovered his usual self-possession. “One has eyes and ears,” he said: “I shall soon drive such a fiend away from this house!” He searched under his gun, and drew forth a weapon of defence, which looked like a stick: there was not much chance of his sleeping that night.

All was still on the outside of the house, but after midnight the dog began to make a noise. Niels opened his window ; though it was bright moonlight he could see nothing stirring, yet the dog continued to growl. Niels went out, armed with his weapon ; he searched the garden and the field ; all was hushed and still, only the scream of a bird was heard in the distance. He saw that there was a light in Bodil's chamber—*she* therefore was also unable to sleep. Had the gipsy woman shown herself at that moment his hasty temper would have broken out again ; but he remained more than an hour watching without seeing any one.

Bodil had lain down half undressed ; she could not sleep, she could not help gazing at the idiot child, who being now awake, lay with his eyes open staring at her ; he looked like an old man, not like a child. She sprang up at length, dressed herself, and went out into the garden ; day had already begun to dawn, Niels had just returned to his room. Bodil went as far as the fence, and there, close to the outside, crouching beneath a willow tree, she beheld the gipsy woman.

“ Lady ! ” she said, almost in a whisper, “ speak low ; be merciful to a poor creature like me ! ” She clasped her hands, and looked with beseeching eyes at her ; “ you have my child—this is not a place for him. Oh, give him back to me ! I am now so used to it that I cannot move unless I have that burden to carry.

He is like my foot that was hurt—however painful it might be, I could not let it be cut off.”

This was all Bodil could make out of what she said, for she spoke in very low tones, and used many words belonging to some strange language.

“Yes, yes!” said Bodil, in an equally-subdued voice; her heart beat fast—she beckoned to the woman. “You shall have him—my brother knew you would come for him; he only wished to let you feel what it was for poor old Grethe to lose what she valued so much.”

Bodil then went in, took up the elfish-looking child, wrapped something warm round him, got some bread and ham, and soon rejoined the gipsy, who joyfully received her child, kissed him, strapped him on her back, and with thanks and sparkling eyes took her way north-east, towards the wood. Whither was she going? But the day before she had directed her course from the Manse towards the heath. Were her wanderings without any plan—uncertain as from what point the wind will blow? No. During the few minutes that sleep had overcome her anxieties the night before, a dream or fancy had again conjured up to her something as found and won—something that had been the cause of her coming to this country where she was born. At the appointed time, straight as the flight of birds of passage, but in her case at the interval of years, she came to the place which a dream, or a trick of the imagination, pointed out to her; she

alone—it had been imparted to her—was to find *that*, which would be able to destroy the power of the witchcraft under which her unfortunate child laboured.

In the now mutilated wood near Silkeborg, through which at that time a road led to the westward, stood then a remarkable old tree: the common people called it MA-KROKONE, a name bestowed on it, because in its shape it somewhat resembled a human being, large at the roots, a little higher up narrower, like legs, above that again an extremely thick trunk, near the top of which stretched out two large boughs, like arms, the whole crowned with a lofty mass of leaves. The shepherds sought shelter under it in bad weather; and formerly, when the country round was uninhabited, travellers often made it their halting-place, sometimes even their night-quarters. Maren-Krokone, or Ma-Krokone, as it was generally called, formed a very good refuge. A number of persons might remain dry under its thick foliage, even during a torrent of rain.

Thither was the gipsy going, it was her birth-place, there, had perhaps been lost, and possibly might be found, the treasure she sought—more to her than all the gold, Peer the gold-digger never succeeded in obtaining. There, or in Dybdal, it might, it must be, found; she had heard this from her madrum,\* who was of unmixed gipsy blood, a true daughter of the race from the Himalaya Mountains.

It is only of late years, since the languages and

\* Mother.

literature of India have become better known, that it has been ascertained that these wandering races are the descendants of an Eastern people, and that their language is derived from the most comprehensive of all languages—the Sanscrit. From the Himalayas, from the plains watered by the Ganges, came these tribes, expelled by the Hindoos, and more despised among them than their lowest caste. They went forth from the province of Assam, whose name is even now preserved among them, in a tradition respecting the town of Assas in their native land Assyria. The only religious belief that this unfortunate race possess, is, that they will return thither, led by Alako. Baro Devel—the great God, sent into this world in the form of a man; his son Alako, to reveal and write the law, and when that was accomplished, he ascended again to his kingdom, the moon, whither he calls the dead. Alako's image is that of a man standing upright, holding in his right hand a pen, in his left a sword; engraved on a stone about the size of a man's clenched hand, and called Bareske Alako—it was kept by every great gipsy chief.

One of these images of their God had the gipsy woman's mother possessed and guarded with care; but she had lost it at the time of her daughter's birth, either under Ma-Krokone's verdant roof, or at Dybdal, and had never found it since.

She was a true madrum, with gold coins in her hair, a knife in her belt, and with more than sulphur and



assafoetida in her pocket; there lay the stone with Alako's image. She and her husband came from the westward; they had slept the night before at a lonely house on the heath at Dybdal; she felt ill, but thought she would be able to reach some friends more to the east, who had made an appointment to meet them. She was not able, however, to get beyond the old tree, Ma-Krokone, and under its spreading boughs her child was born. The skies were gloomy—the foliage of the tree thick, and the night extremely dark; when she sought Alako's image, that heavy stone she always carried about with her, it was gone! She was much agitated and frightened; her husband kindled a large fire, that lighted up even the recesses of the wood, and searched all around for it—nowhere was it to be seen. She wished to return that very night to the house which they had recently left, but she was unable to walk. Next day, however, they set out on their return, her new-born babe hanging upon her back—it was a long, fatiguing journey for her. The air seemed very sultry when they emerged from the wood, and on gaining the brow of the hill, they saw smoke issuing from the heather, and perceived that below, at Dybdal, the heath was on fire—the flames came rushing forward—made a leap as it were, and set fire to the juniper bushes, which in a moment were in a blaze. The fire raged over the whole place where stood the solitary house to which the gipsy pair were returning. In the dusk it looked as if the entire valley were burning,

and such would have been the case, had not a morass arrested the progress of the fire on one side, and the sandhills afforded no food for it on the other. The thick smoke rolled far on, the advancing flames drove back before them heath cocks, hares, and all the wild denizens of the moor, as well as the couple who had been so wearily trudging on. The common people in that neighbourhood were ill-disposed towards the gipsies, as the "madrum" had often said; they attacked the two wanderers furiously, insisted on it that they were the cause of the calamity, and had set the heather on fire, and they beat the poor gipsy man so unmercifully that he died under their ill-usage. His wife, with her new-born infant, was thrown into the jail at Viborg, where she was imprisoned a year and a day, though perfectly innocent of the crime imputed to her. All this was related by her mother to the gipsy who carried about her idiot child. When her mother was permitted to leave Viborg, she went first to Ma-Krokone, the old tree, and from thence through the wood, and over the hills to Dybdal, to the well-remembered lonely house, but could not find the sacred image she sought for. She then left Denmark for ever, but she travelled like a grand lady, she said. Her road lay westward through the sandy plains near the sea; there she took up with some jugglers, who had monkeys and a camel—high on this animal she and her child were mounted, amidst the baggage and monkeys, while they travelled to the sound of drums

and trumpets. The camel proceeded slowly through the deep sand. Her daughter grew up, she had the mother's brilliant eyes and dark hair; she found a lover, and took him as her companion for life. The mother and daughter did not see each other for many years; at length, after the birth of her miserable "Grumsling," who looked as if he would always be afflicted, she met her mother on the banks of the river Danube, beneath the walnut-trees; and madrum spoke to her about the lost Bareske Alaka, about Ma-Krokone, and all that we have just related; she described to her minutely the situation of the places, and the road she was to travel, till at last they seemed familiar to her. A dream increased her hope of help for her "knaspert;" she took her way to Jutland, to the plains of Silkeborg and the Söndre-wood. Ma-Krokone stood there still, but the upper part of it had fallen; there remained, however, the trunk, the feet, and the outstretched arms, which even yet afforded shelter to shepherds and wayfarers. But neither here, nor in Dybdal, was to be found what the gipsy sought. She had spent, on her first arrival, a year and a day in this neighbourhood; she had now returned to it for the third time.

During the violence of a storm, the tree had lost its two spreading boughs, and without arms now stood Ma-Krokone, a strange mis-shapen spectre of a tree. With diligence and hope she searched for the lost treasure, and dug deeper and deeper into the ground,

in vain ! Here it certainly had not been lost. Dybdal was the place to look for it, and there it had been found many years before. On the very day that she stole the musician Grethe's harmonica, she was near it, *she* could have given her what she sought, and would have given it, had she known what value the wretched woman attached to it. Little Karen, who was so melancholy, came from Dybdal, from the poor-house there ; when quite a child she had found the dark stone with the curious engraving. Her mother said it was a magic stone, and that there was good luck in finding such. For years it had lain in her box, but the gipsy did not see that in her sleeping dreams, or waking visions.

She dug a half-circle round the tree, took up and examined every stone she found, whilst the "Grum-sling" sat amidst a heap of fallen leaves which she had gathered together to make a couch for him. He was cross and in bad humour, whimpering and screaming (and he excelled in these accomplishments) until the shrill cry of a wild bird over-head silenced him. He looked up with a half-frightened glance, as a cat looks when she is about to steal anything ; but the gipsy woman searched on, as we know in vain !

## CHAPTER XI.

## DISPUTES AT HOME—SILKEBORG IS BEING BUILT.

“How helpless, how miserable is not that poor child !” exclaimed Bodil, pitying with all her heart the unfortunate gipsy, and her living burden. Such a dreadful fate would be enough to destroy the mother, were it not for the wonderful strength of maternal love.”

“It is a natural impulse,” said Niels, “and is not less observable among the brute creation than among human beings. The hen will fight to protect her chickens: the very earwig, if her young are driven away from her, will gather them round her again. It is instinct, one of the principal wheels which impel the machinery ! You look at me in surprise, but, believe me, it is nothing else. It is by the union of the materials, that the whole work of art arises.”

“I do not understand you,” said Bodil, “and I have no wish to enter into such a subject.”

“But you shall understand me,” said Niels. “It is proper that you should know something of a subject with which all enlightened human beings ought to be acquainted.” And he began to tell her of several

vegetable matters which would not unite or blend with each other. "The four peculiar elements of life are oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbonic acid."

"It is very possible," said Bodil, interrupting him, with a smile. "I, however, do not comprehend all this. *You* have become terribly learned, and *I* never can be that !" She did not wish to continue the conversation, but he was determined that she should listen to him ; there was something very alluring, certainly, in his eloquence, and in the matter, so new to her, which formed his subject. He spoke of the evolutions that were always going on in nature, told her how the earthy portions which chemistry had been the means of discovering in plants, afforded in them nourishment which again formed food for man, all stood in need of warmth, which set the machinery in motion ; but the component parts, when dissolved, returned again whence they came."

"And the spirit to God !" said Bodil.

"To the infinite whole, the Godhead's plenitude," cried Niels, "that old Pan, whom the Greeks believed would be the last, the survivor of the other gods !

"What impious trash are you talking ?" said, in a stern, loud voice, old Japetus Mollerup, who had entered the room unperceived, and had overheard the last part of the conversation. "Open not the door to the devil, or he will enter in a moment with all his train of evil !" He knit his brows, as he looked at Niels, and went away.

But on the same evening the conversation was renewed between Niels and Bodil: she was much distressed, her brother's way of talking had made a painful impression on her mind. She was most anxious to construe what he had said into a mere boyish desire to evince great wisdom and learning, and therefore, when they were sitting again alone, and he rushed, as it were, back to their interrupted conversation, she could not prevent herself from observing,—

“You have said much to-day that has made me very uneasy, but perhaps I may not have understood you. It seemed to me as if you meant that God had vanished from the entire creation.”

“It is just through the creation that we come to Him,” said her brother.

“So it is, and through revelation! But I am not capable of reasoning on this subject, nor indeed of expressing myself properly. My heart requires and longs for a God who is near to me, and can hear me. Your sciences place Him at such a distance from me, that He seems to vanish entirely. You, who are destined to announce the will of the Almighty, and expound it to mankind, should take care of the will-o'-the-wisp of science; such as will lead you towards, and plunge you into, the bottomless gulf. The wisdom of this world, and the kingdom of heaven, it is my belief, are opposed to each other, and one must attach one's self to the one or the other.”

“I believe, on the contrary, that they are very

amicable neighbouring kingdoms; *they* are not at war with each other, but their narrow-minded border inhabitants are, because they want true enlightenment. Let us only seek to find truth, and having found it, hold it fast; then all old myths and old stories will sink into their proper place."

"What I fear is, that in your quest for what you call the truth, you are going a sinful way, not exactly befitting one who is to be a clergyman. If you think as you are speaking now, you will do much harm, and be looked on with contempt by many. You dare not ascend the pulpit."

"I have been reflecting on this myself," said Niels, with a smile. "Your thoughts and mine are pretty much the same."

"The God whom your adopted science would present to me is idealess!" exclaimed Bodil; "too great for me to cling to. My nature seeks the living God—my Saviour—with eyes for me and this world—with ears for my joys and sorrows."

Bodil thought she perceived a new element in her brother's character—the love of teasing; for she was inclined to ascribe to this, rather than to any other cause, his strange mode of speaking. With a hard, unsparing hand, it appeared to her he attacked all that she considered holy and unassailable; and doubtless there is in us human beings often something like demoniacal power; that is to say, the bad predomi-



nates sometimes over the good ; vainglory, ingratitude, and want of forbearance are the principal evidences of this. Niels loved his sister, and valued her understanding, and the goodness of her heart, and yet it was just to her, heedless of the pain he occasioned her, that he poured out what was agitating his own mind. When old Japetus Mollerup was present, this sort of conversation was always avoided ; but it was impossible that the tone which now pervaded his young mind should not, on some occasion or other, betray itself in words.

“ You have picked up some strange modes of expression, Niels,” said the old minister. “ You should wean yourself from them ! ” After such remarks and remonstrances, Niels generally either remained silent, or left the room. These little scenes became of more frequent recurrence, and poor Bodil had to listen to Niels’ complaints.

“ It was going too far—he was no longer a child—and had not ‘ Ollebröd’s patience ’ to bear with everything. The world was not flat, and he was not Montanus the Second.” Tears would stand in Bodil’s eyes ; she perceived, and felt to her sorrow, how different her father’s and Niels’ opinions were. Ah, too different ! But Niels might and must give way to the old man.

Everything comes to a climax, and thus did things here. Strauss’s book about Jesus happened to be named ; and when the old clergyman, who did not

know the work, called it "abominably sinful," Niels replied mildly, but decidedly, and gave it as his opinion, that the holiest subject might bear discussion.

"No !" exclaimed the old man, raising his voice angrily, and starting up, while a deep flush overspread his cheeks. He added, after a moment, in a somewhat lower tone, "At least no one shall speak thus in my house, and I am master here."

Bodil looked much distressed, and her mother trembled in every limb ; she had seldom seen her husband so excited.

The next day a conversation took place between him and Niels.

"I have perceived by many things, you have wandered from the old-established truth and opinions, and are carried away by the current. I know that you belong to the new times, and I to the old ; but there is one thing which in all times is, and will remain, the same—and that is the kingdom of truth, and where is that to be found more pure and holy than in religious knowledge ? The knowledge that will be a treasure to us here and hereafter is to be found in the Bible, but that book, I have observed, you seldom refer to now. The arrogance of learning has crept over you, Master Niels."

"There is certainly nothing, that I know," replied Niels, "that contains greater treasures for us all than the Bible ; in it are thoughts for all times and all mankind, so clearly, so beautifully expressed ; it is living poetry !"

"Poetry!" cried the old clergyman.

"By poetry I do not mean merely words that rhyme, but those which tell upon the heart in the midst of joy, of sorrow, or of fear."

"Do you dare to doubt that one single word in the New Testament is not our Lord's; that the Old Testament was not prompted by the Almighty?"

"I know that Christ himself wrote nothing. We have everything through his disciples; but I am convinced that they could, and did, declare the truth. The occurrences themselves, indeed, are alike, as told by all, but each relates them in his own peculiar way; among the Evangelists the same truths shine forth, but they are variously represented; each Evangelist impresses his relation of events with something of his own especial feelings,—should we therefore deny that there is anything of human addition, we must pronounce that the Gospel itself is capable of being variously rendered."

"You read it according to your own fashion: perhaps religion must shape itself to meet your convenience; be distilled and compounded to suit your taste and pleasure, forsooth!"

"The holy truths of religion are incapable of being changed or tampered with," said Niels, in an earnest tone, and with a reverential manner. "In that which is of most importance, in the main point, we agree; every one who seeks a knowledge of the true faith will, by its effect, assure himself of its divinity."

"What is of most importance—what is the main point?" cried the old man, wrathfully. "Not a letter in the Bible dare be tampered with or cast to the earth"—he stopped. There was a sort of battle going on in his own mind; and during this pause Niels began to speak as if he were challenged, or compelled to explain himself.

"I know well that nothing in the Bible dare be construed differently to its meaning, when that is distinctly expressed; but things are said, even though in themselves insignificant, which cannot be verified: the four corners of the earth could not be described as a globe, any more than its foundation ought to be spoken of when it is hovering freely in the air. The fastness of the heavens is also an inadmissible expression. There is much which can only be received as figurative; for instance, that the Almighty, in boundless space, *sits upon a throne*—that is but an Oriental mode of describing power and grandeur!

"Copernicus demonstrates to us that Joshua spoke figuratively. Could the sun and moon have stood still at the same time in the heavens, as is there written, it would have been an operation, as if one had thrust one's hand into a piece of machinery and stopped one of the wheels which set it in motion; disorder and destruction would have been the consequence."

"He who bids celestial globes to roll in space might well be able to arrest the course of one of these atoms!" replied the old man. "Learning fades away, the

wisdom of one age is opposed by the wisdom of another, but the holy scriptures have never changed, and those who are inspired by God can never doubt! What has taken possession of you, Niels? Does it never occur to you, that with such thoughts as yours, with your belief, you never can, you never dare become the expounder of the word of God? As sure as I live," continued the old man, rising up, his glowing cheeks and kindling eyes, and every feature of his face, exhibiting affliction and anger, "if you do not become a very different man I must, and I *will*, when you are ordained, and presume to ascend the pulpit, go forward, and before the whole assembled congregation demand of you, in the triune Godhead's name, if you have repented and forsaken your present ideas, and believe in the holy scriptures, and all that appertains to the true faith."

"I will never become a liar; had I been inclined to be one, this conversation would not have taken place," said Niels, with a degree of vehemence that exasperated the old man still more.

"You had better go and be an army surgeon!" said Japetus Mollerup. "Chop away at the body or mend it if you can; that is of more importance, doubtless, than what concerns the soul. You are not a Christian, and cannot preach that gospel in which you but half believe!"

"Since we have come thus far," said Niels, in a full, firm voice, "I will speak out; I cannot, I will not,

acting according to my own honest convictions, vouch for the necessity of those forms that seem to me by no means essential, though to the multitude they appear so, who again ought to place confidence in me. We look at the same stars, I believe, but through different telescopes, therefore we would appear to be looking at different objects ; even to the left eye, the same star seems to be in a different position to that which to the right eye it appears to occupy."

"All that is nothing to the purpose," said the old clergyman, "and I will not listen to such profane words ; they are not suitable either to my age or my profession !"

He left the room thereupon ; Niels remaining standing, with a smile on his lips, but it cannot be denied with a painful sensation at his heart ; he felt that cordiality between him and the old pastor was at an end.

So warm a discussion of their respective opinions and principles did not often take place ; but freedom and friendliness of intercourse were no longer possible. There was disunion in that home where heretofore confidence and affection had reigned, and Bodil was the one who seemed to feel the change most deeply. It was a source of sincere grief to her, that her brother had given up the idea of becoming a clergyman.

"Only in consequence of a few hasty words can you really cast so much good, so many blessings from you, and afflict your old friends, my father and mother, so much ?"

"I cannot do otherwise," he replied, impetuously, "and I am glad that there has been a clear explanation, and that everything is now decided in my own mind. I am casting away nothing whose roots are imbedded in the truth. 'If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off' in the body, as well as in the spirit, this is done to ensure certain advantages. I have read about a freebooter of former days, who promised his men, as they were approaching a country he wished to conquer, that he whose hand should first touch the grass there, should be put in possession of the beautiful strip of land before them; and the rovers rowed more lustily, and vied with each other whose boat should first make the land; then one of the pirates seized his war-axe in haste, chopped off his left hand, and cast it over the heads of the other men; the hand fell on the grass, of course touching it first; and the conquered land was assigned to him. The comparison may not be a good one, but you will understand me; to conquer and be the winner there, where I am going, I can cast from me the nearest, the most valued!"

"No, you are actuated by passion, by impulse; it was this that made you spring into the sea and risk your life to save your dog; it was the same disposition that made you bring the gipsy's child to our house . . . ."

"No, it was by my own cool, free-will that I saved the dog," he cried, interrupting her, "and I deliberately resolved on punishing the gipsy woman; I was

not wrong, she had to humble herself! There is something within me which says—‘So AND SO IS RIGHT!’ and I will hearken to that voice; it is the Infinite within me, the spark, the gas-flame that expires when the machine ceases to work, but holds it in motion until the pivot is worn out, and the whole stops at once!”

Niels Bryde soon after left his home. His father and he parted in painful silence; the mother wept, and Bodil stole from the house, met him at a little distance from it, and bade him kindly farewell. Niels smiled and nodded—Hvaps looked boldly around, and settled himself between his master’s feet.

The coachman had to deliver some letters from the Manse at old Avlsgaard, down by Aalevørket, where Herr Skjødt lived; the horses were to get some water and provender there, which detained them some little time. Niels Bryde entered the principal building, which used always to be called “The Palace.” In the large hall there, he found about a hundred people—masons and carpenters and other workmen, who were sitting about as best they could on baskets and barrels, eating their dinner—jugs and bottles stood on the floor. A large paper manufactory was about to be established there. Nobody contemplated then that this building would give rise to a considerable town, and new life at the hitherto solitary heath. This was the year 1844. Almost as quickly as the towns of



America do, did this youngest Danish city spring up, whilst a new life of doubt and mental struggles commenced for Niels Bryde.

The workmen rose and returned to their labour, Niels seated himself in the carriage, and whilst the carpenters' hammers were resounding, where habitations were so soon to arise, the postilion's whip cracked —“forwards !”

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE LETTER—THE CHAMBERLAIN'S DOG—HERR SVANE.

It was in the early days of October—the month when Nature displays her most varied tints with us here in the North. The woods shone in red and yellow, as if every tree were laden with ripe apples and pears. The cinnabar-red and brownish yellow leaves fell one by one, as human beings fall beneath the blast of death; none know how suddenly, how soon, or by what process snatched away. In its many-coloured garb, and in earnest thought, as it were, stood the year, like Jephtha's daughter, who went forth in her richest attire to die. Over the extensive heath, and the ploughed fields as seen beneath the glowing rays of the setting sun, there seemed to be spread a spider's gossamer web, but spun out to a mile in length: this veil was cast over the whole surface of the ground, and looking through the dazzling light which seemed to float above it, what object met the eye? The white walls of the Manse seemed tinted with a rosy hue by the departing rays of the sun, and it stood there, looking so peaceful, so inviting, in strong contrast to the wide

heath, with its forgotten kings' and heroes' graves. The gloom, the sadness, if we may use the expression, which seemed to steal over the whole landscape, when the sun had sunk, harmonized well with the feelings of the inmates of that once happy home.

Reader! Have you ever heard of the Rose of Hell, from whose mouldy-gray leaves exhale sickness, ill-temper, envy, and hatred? Each leaf contains within itself complete power. Evil spirits pluck them in the stormy night—fly with them over towns and country—and every leaf, as it falls and touches the ground, puts forth its malignant might. Such a leaf had been borne hither to the home of kindness and cordiality; such a leaf the old minister fancied was placed in his hand in the shape of a letter from Niels, from him whom he had rescued from misery and destitution, to whom he had accorded a son's place at his hearth, whom he had worked for, relied upon, and endeavoured to inspire with hope and faith in God! The letter certainly showed that its writer bore all that in his recollection—and it conveyed in warm terms the expression of his gratitude and affection; nevertheless it gave the clergyman to understand that he was determined to take his own way, that—according to old Japetus—"he rated his own judgment higher than God's." The old lady wept, and Bodil entreated, though more with looks than words, that her father would not be so much irritated against Niels.

"Oh, that cleverness—that cleverness!" groaned the

minister's worthy wife. "It is not always a blessing—blessed rather are the simple-minded!"

"And he from whom I expected so much comfort!" exclaimed Japetus; "those budding talents which I so rejoiced to see in his boyish years, to what are they not tending? To fruit that can never ripen in the sunshine of the Lord!"

"The blackthorn," said Bodil, "puts forth its blossoms early, but its fruit remains the whole summer and harvest without ripening, and yet its time comes; in winter, when the frost is sharp, when ice and snow are on the ground, it ripens."

"But becomes hard and bitter," replied Japetus.

"It is pressed and fermented, and eventually becomes a pleasant wine," said Bodil.

"You seek to excuse him, a kindness on your part he does not deserve. Full seven weeks have passed since he left us, yet it is only now that he has taken the trouble of sending us a letter—and what a sinful offensive letter! Did you not write to him the very week after he left us? and I know that your affectionate heart would be apparent in every word of your letter. He is the child of arrogance—the child of the devil!" and the old man's lips quivered as he spoke.

"No, father, no!" cried Bodil, who, though she felt that Niels had not behaved well towards his aged friend and herself, still remembered every affectionate word, every action that betrayed good feeling, even the slightest, during the months and years they had

lived together. An uncommon disposition, such as she had perceived in her adopted brother, must evince itself in a peculiar manner.

"The prodigal son will come back," said her mother, "but Niels turns away from his Bible, and refuses to be guided by its precepts !"

"He is very young, and you yourself have said, father, that in the world there are currents of good and evil passing through the heart of man. All will become clear to him by-and-by. We know his hasty, impetuous temper, but we also know that, at bottom, he is good and amiable, *you* know this—*my mother* knows this ! Believe me he will repent, when he allows himself time for reflection."

"There are no signs of repentance in his letter !" said Japetus. "There is perfect self-satisfaction, and he seems quite in earnest ; but his wisdom and knowledge are only of this world. They are derived from the Antichrist, if not from Satan himself."

"Lord Jesus !" exclaimed the old lady, while she made the sign of the cross, and bowed her head.

The letter referred to was, as has been told, the first communication from Niels since his departure from the Manse ; it was addressed to the old clergyman, and expressed the deepest gratitude for the constant kindness shown him—a poor boy, the child of total strangers. But it declared, in very decided terms, that his knowledge of his own character, and his conscience, forbade his entering the church. For more than a

month he had been diligently inquiring into, and weighing what the Established Church and his fellow Christians would require of him, he had taken time for strict self-examination—had struggled with his own feelings—and had finally come to the conclusion that the course he was now pursuing was the only one he could or ought to adopt.

Amidst the various passages in this letter, there was one which made a most painful impression upon old Japetus ; it ran thus :—

“ One of the most important doctrines in the Bible, is that of *original sin*. Science shows me, that before the creation of mankind, death was in the world—death did not enter through the sin of man ; the chapters of Genesis and the different formations of the earth are at variance in the tale they tell. Human beings wrote Genesis, the power of nature speaks in geological knowledge. The theory of original sin is then confuted ; and there is not so much presumptuous arrogance in my mind as to permit the belief, when I know our world is but a perishable atom in the vast space of creation, that God should just select this little spot to descend upon, and assume our form, and clothe himself in our flesh, to become visible to human eyes.”

Again and again did the old clergyman peruse these audacious lines ; his cheeks glowed as if with fever, tears started to his eyes. Niels Bryde stood before him as the Antichrist—as a scoffing spirit reclaimed by

the unquenchable fire, and in the enraged feeling of his pious soul he exclaimed,—

“Could not He who has created wonders in a drop of water, who has taught wisdom to the ant, and has formed veins, muscles, and nerves, in the minute proboscis of a fly—could not He add to these miraculous works by assuming to himself limbs and garments, and becoming visible to human eyes? might not He descend to this atom which is called Earth? Unfortunate Niels! You hold in higher estimation the wisdom of man than the wisdom of the Almighty! The rocks and soil of the earth’s various formations speak with a more authoritative voice in their silence to you, than the everlasting, the living word—that was from all eternity! Deluded boy! Self-sufficient spirit! Vain-glorious!

‘What are all things here below  
Which the world paints in hues so bright?  
They are but shadows, and false light,  
But bubbles bursting on the sight,  
They are but ashes, dust, and blight;  
Vain glory all—we know!  
Vain glory all—we know!’”\*

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The waning-moon cast her pale beams over the silent heath, it was midnight, yet Bodil had not retired to rest; the long unsnuffed wick was flaring in the candle, but she saw it not, she was sitting with her

\* Kingo.

head leaning against the window-frame, whilst in the mirror of her saddened soul appeared the image of her brother—of him who was upon the wrong road. Softly, as the orb of Heaven shed her declining light over the solitary heath, stole into her thoughts a verse of Ingemann :

“ — For the sinful soul appeal !  
If the Saviour would none that are sinners receive,  
Then thyself excluded might kneel ! ”

And in full confidence in prayer she raised her thoughts to God ; when again they returned to the things of this world, Bodil hurried to her desk, and took out her writing materials. She trimmed her candle, and sat down to write. Heavy tears rushed into her eyes and rolled down her cheeks, one dropped upon what she had been writing—she bowed her head lower—the pen fell from her hand—the letter was not finished that night ; she could not find room for all the deep sorrow of her heart.

Have you ever heard of the Rose of Heaven, whose snow-white leaves waft life and health, peace, mildness, and affection ? Every leaf is fraught with blessings, and as the angels kiss them and scatter them over the earth, wherever they fall virtue is called into existence. The letter she had written, upon which her tears had fallen, finished, and sent the next day, was such a leaf !

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From the same blue vault above as over the heath near Bodil, shone the pale clear moon over the empty streets of Copenhagen, where, it being midnight, only at distant intervals a solitary lamp was seen to glimmer ; for the watchmen had extinguished the street lamps by order of the magistrates ; train-oil was dear, and moonlight was a good and a cheap substitute for it. The watchmen were all awake now, for a solitary *Lais* in "the Northern Athens," as Copenhagen is called, hovered like the little fairy with the wooden shoe, around the corner ; a small dog was barking angrily, outside of a house, and his bark seemed to say, "Can I get in through the keyhole ? There is not a fraction of common-sense among you within there ! How can I ring when the bell is so far above the reach of any dog ? You know very well who I am ! The lady of the house waits upon me, and she is the master here, and has the gold key herself."

"It is the chamberlain's dog," said the watchman, looking up to some one, who had called out in much displeasure from a window.

"Give the beast a good thump on the head ! One can get no sleep for his confounded barking !"

"I can't help that," replied the watchman. "It belongs to the chamberlain—it is shut out. I have rung more than once from it—but nobody will stir."

"It belongs to the chamberlain !" said Herr Svane, laughing ironically. He was just passing with his godson, Niels Bryde—they had been at a party together,

and were returning home. "One must not find fault with so distinguished a dog, or both he and his noble family will bite." Herr Svane was in one of his gay humours—one of those humours that made him young among the young.

"Be quiet!" had Niels Bryde roared to the dog; but the creature did not seem inclined to obey the command; on the contrary, he showed his independence, and answered in his own way. "I would like to know if the animal is still barking at the house, or if he has turned his wrath against us. What can he mean?"

"Nothing at all favourable to us!" said Herr Svane; "I can quite understand him; I can put myself in his place, fancy myself a dog, and a petted dog, belonging to a family of distinction! You may well believe that he looks down upon everybody; upon you and me included; upon all who are merely called—men. We are certainly peculiar creatures, not appertaining to his race. He knows, of course, from his puppy-learning, that mankind was not made until the whole world, with all other living things, were created. Nothing more was absolutely necessary—but there was still a sort of a being to be created for sport—a kind of a puppet over the whole—and then came man. 'What a being!' exclaimed all the other creatures that had existed before. 'What sort of an animal is this man? He is neither a brute nor an angel. But he has certainly a good deal of quickness of apprehension, for he has learned much from all of us. The

beaver has taught him how to build houses, the ant and the bee how to model well-ordered communities; but he cannot quite equal them. Mankind are always inventing new schemes to better themselves — *we* have everything we require born with us. Wonderful resources they have; but I do not believe that the eagle would give his eyes for their best spectacles! They think much of their sense in choosing habitations for themselves, yet the stork would never find a home, had he not more than they have. And what have they? Nothing but self-conceit! They call themselves ‘the lords of the creation!’ yet a carriage-horse can run away with a whole family of human beings, and destroy them!’ ”

Niels laughed, and suggested that Herr Svane ought to write a book, to be entitled “Dog-life from a higher point of view.” Therein mankind might be made to dance like absurd puppets, while only the wrong side of them was seen. The time for originals was past.

“Past!” exclaimed Herr Svane. “No; they have but put on dominos, and so they look alike. Mingle among them, draw the domino aside, and you will admit that, at least, every tenth person is a fit character for a comedy. I can point them out to you—can find them in a circle in which you mix yourself. You shall have them brought to you free of all expense—only keep yourself ready!”

As they thus chatted, they had arrived at a short distance from Herr Svane’s home, had reached Garni-

sonspladsen, which then was no better than a slough. Large heaps of stones lay there in all directions; low frameworks of buildings, and high warehouses with shutters, gave it a dull appearance; a large wooden shed, a butcher's stall, with pieces of meat hung out, and bloody livers and lights, were near the crossing, where there was generally most dirt; and therefore Herr Svane said, this almost impassable frontier should be their parting place. But Niels Bryde, enlivened by his godfather's good spirits, insisted on accompanying him as far as his door; and when he got there, he went up-stairs with him.

"Church history and dogmas shall not be studied to-night," said Herr Svane; "instead of all that, let us smoke a cigar together."

"Church history and dogmas are no longer my daily bread!" replied Niels Bryde, somewhat gravely. "But one can make one's living notwithstanding; for instance, one could become a watchman!" he added, laughing. "If you will only teach me dog-language, which you proved this evening you understood, it would really be a very amusing life! Not to speak of the income to be derived from gifts at Easter, Whitsuntide, Christmas, and other holy seasons. Do you think I have voice enough for a watchman, if all other trades fail?"

"But over yonder, in Jutland," said Herr Svane, "what would they think of this police-appointment for the future dean or bishop?"

"I must inform you," cried Niels, abruptly, yet seriously, "that I have given up reading for the theological examination."

"Given it up!" exclaimed Herr Svane, who, for some weeks past, had seen Niels frequently, and held many conversations with him, without having heard or suspected anything of the sort. "And what do they, at the Manse, say to this?" he asked, in great surprise.

"They say that I have behaved ill; that I am ungrateful!—I cannot act otherwise! This matter has been well considered—well debated! I will be an 'army surgeon,' as the old man advised, and 'chop away at the body.' But do not let us talk any more about this to-night; I was in such good spirits, and I would rather retain them. Let that affair take its own course, I can support myself well enough; every strong single man may do that."

"But when love comes?" said Herr Svane; "when one can no longer bear to be alone?"

"One must avoid adopting fixed ideas—and what else is love? You yourself have escaped it pretty well during the greatest part of your life, and are, certes, enjoying alone your usual excellent spirits. Why should not I do the same?—I am determined that I *will*—what you can do, I can."

"No, no!" said Herr Svane, with an earnestness very uncommon to him. He pressed his godson's hand, and smiled sadly. He then tried to assume a comical look, in order to conceal the degree of feeling

that had escaped him. Well he knew the old sentence, "Your secret is your prisoner; let it escape you, and you are his!"

How often had it not been said that Herr Svane had never thought about any one but himself, about anything except jesting and sarcasm, or being a down-right hater of mankind; he seemed never to think about—what always forms the favourite theme for young lyric poets—"HER"—and which was the cause of Werther's death. The world fancies it sees everything, and yet sees so little!

"I had once your disposition, your temper, and can only repeat to you Goethe's words:—

'Eines schickt sich nicht für Alle!  
Sehe Jeder, wie er's treibe,  
Sehe Jeder, wo er bleibe,  
Und wer steht, dasz er nicht falle!'"

"You also!" cried Niels, grasping his hand. This was an exclamation of astonishment, of sympathy; a string was touched, that ought not to have sounded—that should not—for Herr Svane had said too—"Because I will it so!"

Not another word was said on the subject; but if Niels, like King Solomon, had been able to understand the language of beasts, he might, before retiring to rest that night, have heard about her, who was now no longer an ethereal-like being as formerly, no longer slender, and in the freshness of youth, and who only retained from those days a degree of brilliancy in her

eyes, but not the witchcraft, which can transform a wisp of straw into a branch of blooming roses—nay, into a bold, graceful steed. “My poor godfather!” thought Niels, “so he, too, has burned himself by the flame. Wax candle, or tallow candle, the flame would give equal pain! I shall never fall in love—not positively in love! that I know—there is much else to do in this world.”

Such were Niels Bryde’s reflections, as he bade his godfather good night; and on his way home again passed the chamberlain’s house. The watchman appeared to be sleeping, but the little dog was jumping briskly about, barking, however, no longer; he ran up to Niels, sniffed at him, and seemed inclined to make his acquaintance, and follow him home. Niels drove him away, but he soon came back; and when Niels reached the door of the house where he lodged, the animal did not run off, but stood there, looking as miserable and anxious as if he wanted to beg a night’s lodging.

“Come in, then!” said Niels Bryde.

The moon was shining in on the old portrait of the grand lady who looked so cross, and concealed a hole in the tapestry. Hvaps sprang forward with a joyful whine to meet his master, but uttered a very unfriendly growl when he saw the little stranger. Niels commanded peace and good fellowship, placed a bowl of water on the floor for them, and broke some bread in pieces for the two; the strange dog, who was very

fastidious, sniffed at the repast, rejected it, and only took a gulp of the water; shortly after, the two dogs lay down quietly together on the carpet under the table. Niels Bryde also sought repose, and was soon fast asleep, without his thoughts having wandered for a moment to the Manse on the heath, even to Bodil, who, in the silence of that very night, had wept for him, prayed for him, and poured out to him all the affectionate feelings of her heart on the paper, which her kind care sent to him, like a message of peace—a Rose of Heaven. He slept much more soundly than he had done for many nights, when various currents of thought had been rushing through his soul; we shall, by-and-by, hear more about them.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## GENIUS AND A FALSE ALARM.

MORE than six weeks had elapsed since Niels Bryde had returned to Copenhagen from Jutland, angry at his friends at home, perhaps because he felt that he was not altogether in the right. He had recalled all his recent recollections of the Manse, and had found in them nothing but bitterness: he went so far as to fancy that he had been ill-treated. The old man had quite forgotten that, in the course of years, the child grows up to be a man, and that benefits bestowed do not confer a patent for despotism over person and mind. His self-will rebelled against this; his inclinations developed themselves more forcibly; the fetters cast round him there must and should be broken. He almost felt now a degree of dislike, indeed mistrust, of all that related to the clergy. His memory placed before him every deficiency, even every evidence of inferior talent, or human infirmity, he had perceived among various clergymen. One preacher's discourses sounded to him merely like passages from the Bible, strung together at random,

without any arrangement, requiring assistance either from the intellect or the heart. Another's was as flowery as beds of roses and tulips surrounding a fountain ; a third sought effect by thundering about "the gates of hell." That I should become like one of these, is what the old man over yonder would like, he said to himself bitterly.

Bodil's first letter, which reached him immediately after his return to Copenhagen, was certainly well meant, and fully evinced her sisterly fondness for him, and anxiety about him. But an allusion to his hasty temper and youthful inexperience offended him, and the letter was left unanswered. He perceived that there was something demoniacal stirring within him, but he did not struggle against it. His reasoning with himself was, that a man must have the courage to permit all the wild thoughts and energies within him to gush out ; must himself contemplate them, and seek out the first bubbles of the spring ; probe his own motives for every action, even if these were bad. A man must make himself familiar with every wandering thought, with sin itself, with every lust, be sensible of his inclination for them, and prove his own powers in this self-examination ; he must have sufficient strength of mind, without fear, to question even what had seemed sacred to him ; convince himself if Christianity be truth, and have nerve enough to declare his convictions, disdaining to be a liar, as many are !

These were Niels Bryde's ideas !

A clergyman he could not, and would not, become. But, what then? "Orsted's Discourse on Natural Science" had made a great impression on him, but the echo of the scorn which he fancied lay in his adopted father's words, "You had better go and be an army surgeon, and chop away at the body," threw almost a halo of glory around the medical profession. An upright physician was an agent of mercy, a comforter, a hope in trouble. He could discern *truth* in everything! Niels Bryde made up his mind therefore to study medicine. Those pupils who paid the best, he determined on not giving up, they would at least secure to him a frugal competence. He was resolved to accept of no more assistance from the Manse. His debt was heavy enough, he thought, it need not be increased.

Thus things stood up to the night when, as related, the chamberlain's dog and Hvaps had made acquaintance, and Niels Bryde had retired to his couch. Thus they stood till the morning, when, after having dressed himself, taken a cup of coffee, and spent about an hour in speculating about things in general, he betook himself, with Ane Sophie, Madam Jensen's servant girl, carrying the chamberlain's dog, to the home of the little animal—where, on their arrival, they were ushered up-stairs.

The lady made her appearance. She was a very stout woman, rather too old to wear curls hanging over the back of her neck; but these had doubtless

become her when she was young, and she could not forget this ; she looked like an old "Gurli," whose *naïveté* had run to seed. The beauties of her mind no longer were in bloom ; indeed, they were somewhat withered. Her eyes were still fine, and it was evident she knew this ; but on that morning she had spoiled them with the tears she had shed for Zemire, who had been left in the street, and taken by savage strangers. The little dog wagged his tail with joy ; the chamberlain's lady wept, and forgot her gratitude to, as she called him, "the preserver of her darling," though she told him that her house should always be open to Herr Student Bryde, whose introduction was brought about by Zemire.

The chamberlain entered into the Scandinavian subject with him, and was anxious to know what the students thought of it. Herr Bryde answered, as hundreds might have answered ; and the noble pair discovered that he was a very clever young man, and determined that he should be invited to a large party the following week ; it would be interesting to a student from Jutland to be present at a fashionable *soirée*.

Two days after, early in the morning, Madam Jensen presented herself before her lodger with a newspaper in her hand. "What can all this be in the papers ?—Is not this the number of our house ?" she named the number ; "and don't we live in Sværtégaden on the third floor ?"

"To be sure, quite right," said Niels.

"But are you going to give any one a present of two thousand dollars? It is really charming to read, but I do not understand it," and she pointed out in the newspaper a long paragraph, headed—

"SOUGHT—A GENIUS WHO HAS BEEN NEGLECTED."

"This is very amusing," said Niels Bryde, when he had read the long paragraph, which began thus: "In the world things go on as in a comedy;" and then it went on to tell of two brothers; the one very practical, and all went well with him; the other full of genius, and everything went wrong with him; at last he was attacked by illness, and fell into such want, that he was obliged to obtain pecuniary assistance from the practical man, who sent him twenty-five dollars as a great boon. These he had to use in paying the doctor, the apothecary, and various necessary things; but he reserved enough to take a whole lottery ticket the last day of drawing, and his ticket turned up a prize. The genius received the money and died—died before he had time to spend it; but he made his will, and in it desired that the interest of the capital which would amount to two thousand rix dollars annually, should be bestowed on some undervalued Danish Genius. And therefore every such genius was requested that day—the birthday of the deceased testator, to send a letter with the word "Neglected" on the address, or to call personally during the morning in Svørttegaden, at the very house in which Madam Jensen and Niels Bryde resided.

It was evident that the whole was a hoax ; and Niels immediately attributed it to Herr Svane, who had promised to show him how rich the town was in originals. But could it be possible that any person would be so simple as to fancy this advertisement was inserted in earnest, and attend to it ? Take what is most incredible, and it will find believers, exactly as the stupidest book will find its readers. There came a few letters, one perhaps out of the number written for a lark, and entering into the joke ; but most of them seemed to have been penned in sober earnest ; sundry individuals also presented themselves, but we will only take time to describe one of them, whom Niels Bryde, at a later period, was to meet again.

Madam Jensen was in the room, but left it as the visitor entered : he was an elderly gentleman, dressed in a frock coat, a horsehair stock, and, though it might scarcely be believed, a paper false collar ! He introduced himself as one of those to whom the advertisement was addressed, one who had been neglected—which, however, he now looked upon as a piece of good fortune—an advantage for the future—and when Niels Bryde asked him who he was, he replied by another question.

“Do you know Solomon de Cans, the discoverer of the power of steam ? He was a remarkable man, far before the age he lived in, and therefore it confined him in a mad-house ! It is a pity he had not been living now, he would have been the man to receive the annuity.

I name him, but I am opposed to him, I reject steam, with all its costs, I do not require it."

"You mean——," began Niels Bryde.

"Steam costs money to be obtained and kept up," said the man. "Steam costs human life; *I* manage it better, without expense, without danger; only a machine is in question, and I can say—pray look at this—it costs nothing—it will make money; and so forth."

"Then you have a cheaper and safer agent than steam?"

"Yes, I have. You know the name of Robert Fulton, the inventor of steam-boats? He began as a child with a sort of wheel, he turned it, and the boat was set in motion; he had found out the right yet very simple process. Everything is simple in this world! I choose to raise my leg—see—I raise it; I choose to stretch out my arm—I stretch it out! This costs nothing, it requires no help of steam, no art, it is but the power of the human will, and with it, vessels can go, when its operation is carried on by a tread-machine."

And now he explained how the whole of the deck of the ship must be so constructed with swaying moveable planks, that as the passengers walked up and down, and tread and retread these boards, the machinery would be set in motion, the wheels would turn, and the paddles go, without any expense at all

"To use steam is the wrong way to go to work," he continued. "Is the earth turned by steam? Do the

moon and stars move by its agency? No! The whole machinery is more simple. Had Napoleon known the tread-machine, he would never have died at St. Helena; but I had no ideas then, and I did not know Napoleon, and he did not know me. He rejected steam; in that we resemble each other—there we meet.”

Niels Bryde did not feel quite sure whether the man was deranged, or had only the “genius fever.” What answer could he make to him? The easiest and most proper one was to tell the plain truth, namely, that they had been brought together by means of a newspaper hoax, that the whole printed paragraph was but a fabrication; that he had no annuity to bestow on any one, and had nothing to do with the matter. To his surprise, he found that the man neither looked angry or disappointed at this intelligence; but, after having exclaimed, “Is that the case? Ah! I suspected it,” he resumed the subject of his tread-machine, and continued to expatiate on its simplicity and other excellences. It almost appeared as if the stranger were quite satisfied with his visit, since he had found an intelligent listener to his plan: before he took his departure, Niels was obliged to promise that he would go and see the model of the tread-machine, a sort of barge that lay close to “Larsen’s Plads.” That Niels did not go is no matter to us; when next they met it was in one of life’s most serious hours.

Of the letters which were received, we will transcribe



one. Niels was struck with it ; he considered it to have been concocted in sport ; but Herr Svane, when he saw it, pronounced the contrary ; he thought it was meant in earnest. The signature was, "No Genius, only a Heart."

"Forgive me—I am a woman,—I would otherwise have come to you, but *I* must write ! A genius I am not, but a heart and feelings have I for it, and therefore, according to the advertisement, I venture to apply. I will not waste your invaluable time, but merely state, briefly and clearly, my honest convictions. A neglected genius has his future glory in his being neglected ; do not take half of this glory from him with two thousand rix dollars a year ! I think there is another claim to the annuity which I will recommend to your consideration. It may be said that our time is the age for monuments ; monuments are erected to all great men. But, let me ask, have not the great and distinguished monuments enough in themselves ? I believe and assert that they have ; and it would be well if monuments were thought of for inferior people, who require them more. By inferior people, I mean those people of genius who have never attained celebrity, and yet have done all they could. Yes, it would be a charming and a worthy idea to erect monuments to the possessors of small useful talents ; for instance, the inventor of chemical sulphur-matches, which have no smell. It is an invention that is useful in common life, and is, in

its own small way, quite as important as steam in its large applications. I think it would be right, too, to erect a monument to the inventor of Italian irons. How many a mother and her helpless children live alone by Italian irons! The invention is a blessing. But the inventor himself is so unknown, that not even his name has gone forth to the world! Perhaps the inventor was a *she*. I dare say it was invented by a woman. Let us erect a monument to her. 'Why might not the small become great!' as a celebrated poet has said. Let us think of the neglected small ones—those we know had really genius, and to one of them accord the annuity. This is my view—my opinion—take it into your consideration, while I subscribe myself,

“NO GENIUS, ONLY A HEART.”

“POSTSCRIPT.—There is much more I should like to have said, but as I have explained my meaning tolerably well in what I have written, I will no longer trespass on your valuable time!”

Niels Bryde stuffed this note, indeed the whole pack of notes, into his pocket, and betook himself to his godfather's Herr Svane, from whom the hoax had emanated. The visit he had received was reported, the letter read.

“Well, was it not a good idea?” said Herr Svane; “a comedy might be written on it, entitled ‘Genius and a false Alarm;’ the false-alarm parts to be sup-

ported by those who applied—the Genius, the author himself might personate.”

“Write it,” said Niels.

“Oh no! I have another whim now, which I shall not carry out either,” cried Herr Svane, “unless I can convince myself that it would be more lucrative and more agreeable than correcting the press, frequenting auctions, and all these other small concerns upon which I have now to feed myself. I might publish a couple of periodicals, a quiet and a stirring one. The quiet one would have to begin with the lyrical studies of a young author—it might be a little tame at first to be sure. But it would improve as the characters came out, they should be very good, excellent, every one would contribute to it right and left. In the lower part of the columns, there would have to be a long French romance, but not too long! The more stirring paper I would call ‘The Iron collar.’ Every one might find a place in it, and there would be a choice for all; people like to recognise those they know. There would also be articles about art, and the theatre, and humorous sketches of different kinds.” Hans Svane smiled at his own fancies.

Niels told him of his new acquaintance, the chamberlain, and that he had been asked to tea, or rather to a large rout, that he had been introduced by Zemire, as the lady had been pleased to express herself. He told all the particulars, and Herr Svane asked with some interest about the lady, how she looked, and what im-

pression she had made upon him. Niels could say little else about her, except that he had seen her in ecstasies, in smiles and tears at the recovery of Zemire.

"She must have been very handsome once," he said.

"Very handsome indeed!" replied Herr Svane, somewhat gravely.

"But certainly very frivolous," said Niels Bryde. "I could not but fancy that she was a sort of person to be the writer of that epistle I received to-day."

"Full of soul—I mean imbued with a taste for the beautiful—she was in her youth. She was herself one of the leading beauties of Copenhagen. A smile from her has made many a one happy, a dance with her turned many an inexperienced youth crazy. She used to look like a fairy queen, such a charming delicate figure—so lively—and with such beautiful eyes!"

"Eyes—yes, oh yes!" exclaimed Niels Bryde, "but their original fascination is doubtless gone. You knew her then when she was young?"

"Yes," said Herr Svane, "who does not know and remark *her*, who is looked upon as the greatest beauty of the day? It was her beauty which made her a chamberlain's lady." And he dropped the subject. Had Niels been a little more versed in certain entanglements of the fancy, and symptoms of heart affairs, he would at that moment have acquired some little insight into matters of which Herr Svane never would speak.

The evening of the *soirée* came; some of the guests arrived at nine o'clock, some at ten, some at half past

ten. The rooms were small, and the party large; there were diplomatists, ladies, and—Thorwaldsen himself! The people stood jammed up against each other, it was very warm, and very tiresome. The Italian opera singers were to be there. The celebrated tenor was coming. Lights were blazing around, the bright eyes of the chamberlain's lady were sparkling. Niels Bryde was greeted with a most friendly smile. "Monsieur l'étudiant!" was most welcome. "Zemire's love." These were the only crumbs of conversation that fell to his share, and from these he could not say whether she was "full of soul" or not. There was no singing after all; but salads and bad red wine.

It was not until a few days after that he became better acquainted with her.

Niels happened to meet the chamberlain accidentally near the door of his house; his lady was sitting at one of the windows; Niels bowed to her, she returned the salutation; and when the chamberlain asked him to walk in, he remembered that it was his duty to call after the party, therefore accompanied him to the drawing-room, where sat the gracious lady, who formerly, with the fascinations of youthful beauty, had lighted the torch of love in so many hearts; yes, was once Herr Svane's "constant thought." To win her he tried flights of fancy; taxed his genius, and eschewed the ordinary paths of life; what was there in them to offer the fairy queen of beauty? But all her fascination lay in the

exterior, and now that was gone, nothing remained. The dimples, which had become her so much when young, had turned into wrinkles; the waving ringlets were not suitable to an elderly matron, and the torrent of words which she poured out without any connection with each other, a mode of speaking which she mistook for eloquence, quite annihilated everything like a reasonable meaning. A good engraving of one of the Madonnas at Dresden, which was hung up in the room, suggested the first subject for conversation. Herr Bryde had seen the original; he had travelled, she understood.

"It is charming!" said the lady. "And the hotels! Elegance—velvet sofas, such as one is accustomed to! Berlin—Dresden! Yes, but Venice!—that is my city. Water—moonlight—palaces; marble steps down to the very cellars! The old Doges!—one feels them there! And Switzerland, too! But *that* is quite different. Was there last year. Up in the skies—good roads—giddy! I fell on my knee. And yet I am no longer an enthusiastic girl. God's omnipotence! one must travel—travel one's-self, else one has not travelled!"

Niels Bryde had scarcely been allowed to utter a word; there was now, however, a pause, during which Zemire lifted its head from its little basket, and seemed to recognise Herr Bryde.

"Your Schutzling!" said she. "Zemire—intelligent—human thoughts—the *soirée*!"

Thus she went on for nearly half an hour, and Zemire lay in her lap and turned itself; and Herr Bryde looked as if he were under a conversation-douche bath. All sorts of things were spoken of, but all in similar chopped sentences. Niels Bryde felt a singing in his ears, as if he had been travelling in some fast-going vehicle during a gale of wind; most thankful he was when he could seize an opportunity of kissing the lady's hand, and making his escape.

"She is very dreadful!" he said to Herr Svane, who would no doubt have said the same, if he had known her now. It was thirty-five years since he had stood among the ranks of her admirers, and had been distinguished by her, and had almost been the happy chosen one, which the chamberlain became. At that time Herr Svane saw with the eyes of a young man who was desperately in love; at that time, too, she was beautiful; every word she spoke seemed music. Time divides and clears up; but Herr Svane had not arrived at the clearing point. He carried his secret about like a deep mystery, a charming dream, never realised; and in that lay his good fortune, though he did not know or suspect that it *was* good fortune.

## CHAPTER XIV.

SUCH WAS NOW NIELS BRYDE.

THE letter from Bodil, which she had written that night in the depths of her sorrow and affection, had made a good impression on her brother; he felt a longing, in a kindly spirit, to meet her again in thoughts and views—to come to a closer approximation; and, in this state of mind, wherein his good disposition had the ascendancy, he wrote to her as his feelings prompted. We will give a short extract from his letter, which would have afforded poor Bodil much pleasure if it had ever reached her.

“Believe me,” he wrote, “I so well understand your soul and thoughts! You are much more kind-hearted—much better than I am, or ever shall be in this world, whose currents of good and evil alternately agitate my easily-swayed mind. Your faith is a treasure to you, a treasure far richer than gold; perhaps it is foolish of me to question the impression on the coin. Pity me, when I tell you that I must collect from all the profundities of nature to acquire



that wealth which seems to be yours without an effort, and probably I shall never, among all my researches, succeed in winning the opulence you already have!"

In this strain he wrote on the first perusal of Bodil's letter; but the next morning he read over what he had written, and perceived that he had made the admission that he was not perfectly convinced the course he was pursuing was the right one, and had shown himself infirm and vacillating. The kind letter was therefore torn up, and another concocted, lively, clever,—or intended to seem so—with various expressions purporting to convey the idea that he was totally wrapt up in scientific pursuits, and had chosen the wisest and most suitable course for himself.

His letter was assuredly well written, but there was no heart apparent in it, and it was on the warmth of his heart that Bodil had relied for their meeting again, and renewing the pleasant intercourse of dear, bygone days. The equipoise and confidence of mind evinced by his letter were in reality, however, not his; misconceptions, as he himself called them, ever arising and increasing, started forward, sometimes suddenly, like damp in new buildings, and the great framework science had raised, threatened to crumble to pieces. Bodil would have said that it was the voice of the Almighty warning and calling him. Greater and greater became his avidity in the acquisition of knowledge; he read night after night till the dawn of day, and Madam Jensen, who knew this was his habit, declared

it was very right to study hard, but one could take orders without such fatiguing exertions.

He was continually comparing in his own mind the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of the other.

By anatomy, which interested him deeply, and to which he paid great attention, he saw how our bodies—the animal portion of us—are composed of small cells, the one issuing from the other—all life proceeding from them. Like many others, he lost himself in his contemplations in the study or admiration of the separate cells, and did not look rather at the combination of the whole, did not receive the lesson which even the smallest bird's egg can convey. In it, also, cell after cell develops itself, each constantly undergoing change, and what to the uninitiated eye appears a long dark line descending downwards, the glance of science perceives to be the channel to something of importance, that line becomes the backbone. A further development produces pulsation—it assumes a shape—it becomes a living bird. During this progressive change lofty thoughts are suggested; the mind looks up to Him who has foreseen all, ordered all, even to, within the egg, the little sharp beak that is to break the hard shell, and permit the newly-made creature to come forth into life. Niels Bryde was now, however, only at the cells—and many advance no further.

He had noticed the power of electricity to produce all the perceptions of the senses, prismatic forms to the eye, sounds to the ear, alterations of heat to the feel-

ings, &c., &c., &c. ; the senses were reduced to streams of electricity. That organ and the essence of life, might be one and the same; and in this case, he assumed, it might be believed that with the annihilation of the brain, the soul might die; "with the extinction of the organ, the phosphor might be extinguished which had been conveyed to it by the father and mother, and penetrated into the cells which formed the limbs." Weeks, months, glided by in reading and researches; the bold mind of youth dared to take many a presumptuous flight of thought, and before the expiration of a year Niels Bride had carried things so far, that he had exchanged genuine truth for what a great writer of our time calls "the vapid imitation of real understanding."

He felt in his human nature God incarnate: youthful self-importance, liberty of soul and body rendered him presumptuous; his motto was borrowed from the stoic's axiom, "Obey yourself." He felt secure in the health and vigour of youth. But there were also moments when glimpses of light seemed to shine on his soul, when he felt as if he would fain admit all that was good and great; then would come a battle, such as the Bible describes between the Angel and Jacob. He recognised in mankind the crowning work of the powers of nature, of the Spirit of the universe; yet this crowning work—the whole human creation, in another train of thought would appear almost vanishing from existence. He saw that the world was always

the same—the earth never lost one inch of its weight ; also among mankind that good and evil prevailed as from all time.

It was not arrogant conceit, but an overvaluing of human nature—the God within it, as he called it, that led him to fancy that he could rise superior to himself; could support earthly sorrows without the hope of *a deathless eternity*—yes, even without God ! Audaciously he sang :

“ Ich hab’ mein Sach auf Nichts gestellt.  
Juchhe ! ”

These ideas, in the fermenting mind of our young *priest-apostate*, were the result of two whole years’ reading, thinking, and agitation. During these two years he had passed the various college examinations with great credit and distinction. In talents he stood high amidst the other students, and in intellectual development far above most of them.

Two years had now elapsed since Niels Bryde had last visited his home on the Jutland heath ; letters, indeed, but only between him and Bodil, had been exchanged ; latterly, however, their correspondence had slackened. *He* was her constant thought, and she had hoped that they might meet at least this approaching summer, during which the golden wedding of the good old couple was to be celebrated. “ He will come then, surely,” she said, and her mother was of the same opinion, for he had been “ a good child.”

But he did not come ; a letter to Japetus Mollerup himself, expressed, however, in kind and flowing terms, his participation in the joy of that festive day. This letter made a painful impression. Japetus showed it to his wife and daughter, laid it down, and did not reply to it. At first, the more the old gentleman reflected on the conduct of his adopted son, the more angry he became. The good lady grieved much ; but when, after a time, she perceived that it had not made a deep impression on her worthy husband, it passed very much out of her mind. Bodil felt the most disappointed, and grieved the longest ; but she loved her adopted brother, and made as many excuses for him as she could ; and also she did her utmost to make the festival, which was attended by friends and neighbours, and indeed the whole community, as agreeable a one as possible.

Niels also experienced on that day a painful feeling. Had " his father " but written one word to say that he expected him over there, he would certainly have gone. As it was, his jealous fancy led him to think that his society was no longer acceptable to his early friends ; it would not be advisable for him to leave town ; he had his examination to read for, and his pupils to attend to ; he had written his congratulations—it was all right.

It was a duty he owed to himself, not to be disturbed in the smooth path he had found out ; if he had now arrived at the culminating point, that with our life on this earth ends our whole existence—for he

had already attained this elevation of ideas—then the doctrine of Epicurus, “Enjoy all things and be happy,” was right. The spring of enjoyment lies deep; it has fountains, where sparkle the spirit’s most exhilarating draughts, and also collect its lowest dregs. “Know all, and choose the best,” said Niels Bryde to himself; but the best was often that which the humour of the moment selected as such.

He never saw anything of “Solon-Diogenes;” that individual had disappeared for the last two years. How much interest they would have taken in each other’s society is therefore unknown. Meanwhile Niels Bryde’s circle of acquaintance, “the good-morning and good-bye” friends, became much extended. One might have said of them with Goethe—

“Wären’s Bücher—ich würde sie nicht lesen.”

He was often to be seen walking with them, or with his elder or younger fellow-students. Sometimes with men who seemed in all things different from him; it was not easy to guess what could be the fellow-feeling between them. Herr Svane expressed his surprise, and the reply he received was explicit enough, but smacked of that youthful presumption, which on the stage of this life was the principal element in the character of Niels Bryde.

“A person of superior intellect, as you are pleased to call me, and a mindless blockhead, may draw very well together occasionally; for even among the cleverest

there is something of frivolity, and that something is then the point of union. Prince Henry would have his Falstaff. Besides, though I do not apply the remark to myself and my companions, yet it may be of general application, I think, that as many a one keeps a dog or a parrot, whom he really loves, so one may also have friends whom one may like, though they are inferiors in most respects."

Niels Bryde was of that ardent temperament that he might well have made several dangerous evolutions on the slippery paths of passion; but what held him safely back was—we dare not in speaking of him say, "*his good angel*," but rather what he himself would have called it, his "*sense of the beautiful*."

The little insight which Julius Arons had given him into the Hamburg mysteries, and into his young eastern heart, he had also obtained in Copenhagen, and in himself. He could in a manner have said with Holberg's Chilian, "It is the same with us!" And yet in the vicinity of the sorceress, it was with Niels as with Faust, in the "Walpurgis Night," when he left the dance with the fair one, for—

"Ach! mitten im Gesange sprang  
Ein rothes Mäuschen ihr aus dem Munde!"

The beautiful maintained its right with him—the loftiest and the lowest thoughts sometimes meet. The pure sunlight plays on the greasy mud.

"It is charming to look from the tops of the hills

upon the bright swamp beneath," said he. "I often feel inclined to spring down amidst the luxuriant green, but as I am about to gratify the desire, a breeze sweeps by, which reminds me of the swamp, and I draw back. Call not this feeling virtue ; it is no self-command on my part—it is but an opposing vibration of the nerves. This is no longer security ; perhaps I may have a fit of dizziness, and fall from the height. I am as much in danger of that as any one else is ; the vertigo may come to-morrow—to day ! It would be weakness on my part, however, to avoid the brow of the hill for fear of falling over."

His "sense of the beautiful," then, saved him, and to add to its influence came that prospective glance which the eye of intelligence was able to take : he found a guardian angel in that which the multitude but regard as ruin. "Sobriety's path leads to well-being" was the admonition the invisible hand wrote upon the wall for him. To keep that path had to be avoided the snares and temptations placed on all sides by voluptuousness, gluttony, drunkenness, and every vice, which, like threatening spirits, stand near, and scourge with rods those who forsake the path, driving them into the deep sties, the death-giving swampy soil, where the human machine finally meets its destruction.

Niels Bryde understood this, and went his way steadily ; we shall see in time whither it will lead him : but at the present moment we shall accompany him in a morning visit.



## CHAPTER XV.

## GOETHE'S FAUST, AND ESTHER.

ONE morning—time is reckoned in Copenhagen according to the hour for meals, and even if people do not dine till six o'clock in the evening, it is all morning before that—Niels went to pay a visit to the Arons family: there was no one at home except the old grandfather, and “little Esther,” as the youngest daughter was still called, though she was now seventeen years of age. She was sitting alone in the drawing-room, and was so much engrossed with a book that she did not observe the entrance of any one. She seemed quite startled when Herr Bryde accosted her, blushed deeply, and glanced at him with an expression of alarm in her large dark eyes.

“It is only I,” he said; “you are not surely afraid of me? All the rest of the family are out, are they not?”

She answered this last question with a “yes,” but still looked much embarrassed; he thought he perceived she was trying to hide under her pocket-handkerchief the book she had been reading.

"I have interrupted you, in a very amusing book, I fear?" said Niels.

"Amusing!" she replied; "it can scarcely be called that."

"May I see it?"

"No!" this monosyllable was not uttered in an unfriendly manner, but with an earnestness that showed she meant it. "I shall let my grandfather know you are here," she added, as she rose, and left the room with her book.

"Why, what could she have been reading?" said the old gentleman, when Niels Bryde laughingly told him what had passed, and hinted that *all* romances were not fit to be read by young girls.

"It could hardly have been a romance," said the old man; "it was much more probably some scientific work, or, perhaps, the New Testament."

"Does she read that?" exclaimed Niels.

"Yes; I once surprised her with it. Her reading is very different from that of most young ladies, but I am convinced she will never select an improper book, or be anything but pure-minded."

Esther often did read the New Testament; but was her uncommon style of reading natural and advantageous to the young Jewess? Her old grandfather, so orthodox in his belief, felt no anxiety about her.

"It was not the New Testament I was reading," she said, one day, in confidence to Niels Bryde, when they

happened to be alone together, and he had skilfully led the conversation to the subject. "Why should I have been annoyed at your finding me reading *it* ? It was a totally different book. You would no doubt have laughed at my being so interested in a work which I really scarcely understood, but I am very glad I have read it."

"But you must have understood the work or you could not have enjoyed it."

"I do not understand it as well as you do, and many others who know so much more than I ; but I can perceive, that it is so rich, so profound ! It is like the record of a real life, I have not words to express what I think of it."

How astonished he was, when she mentioned the name of the work—Goethe's "*Faust* !"

"No doubt you would have much pleasure in reading the first volume, it is a well-connected whole, where Gretchen appears "*gerichtet*" and "*gerettet*." The second volume, on the contrary, is like a comet's tail, that sometimes shines out, sometimes disappears ; there is no cohesion, no dramatic arrangement, no continuous story. Goethe had become old."

"Have you read it lately ?" asked Esther.

"No, not for some years ; I grew tired of all the pageants and allegories, the cream of the composition belongs only to the first volume."

"I think, on the contrary, to the second volume,"

said Esther; "it seems to me that volume contains what you call 'a continuous story.' I could not be done with it until I had read the last volume."

"Oh! one may truly say that of every work in two volumes," said Niels Bryde, laughing, but so good-humouredly, that Esther was not vexed, and he went on to say—"I must honestly confess, I am not quite strong in my recollections about it, but this I remember, that it struck me as being so vague, so whimsical, that it was impossible for me to find anything like system in that second volume. Have *you* found any? I was disappointed, and have never felt any inclination to look at the book again."

"Well, I do not wish to persuade you to do so," said Esther; "but *I* missed neither cohesion nor point."

"What have you been able to make of it? Have you been able to draw, as it were, one whole picture from the crowd of images? I can hardly believe it."

Esther coloured, but there was a quiet decision in the expression of her countenance. "I have not tried to throw into any form, as an abstract, the action of the whole story, defining the different parts, but this might be done."

She had always evinced a degree of regard for Niels Bryde, and shown more confidence in him than in any of those who were even nearly connected with her; she would not have spoken to any one else as she had

done to him respecting the work she had been reading.

Like the generality of readers—as he himself allowed, he had done little else than turn over the leaves of the second volume of “Faust;” he had been delighted with the first part, which, in form, resembles a tragic drama, and has consequently been introduced on the German stage. He found in that portion of the poem, pursuit, conflicts, love, and downfall. Faust’s and Gretchen’s story is the dramatic thread which breaks at her death; even the first volume appeared only as a fragment, and for years it maintained its place as a poem of itself.

The second volume followed piecemeal, one scene was crystallized after the other, “ist fortzusetzen,” stood there, but if it would or could be so was a question more easily asked than answered.

When one sees the magnificent Hercules Torso at the Vatican, it is evident to us that it is a complete and finished work of art; but we regard a poem differently that gives, time after time, some single portion of a great giant-statue; and when one knows that the author is advancing to old age, one is apt to question if he can finish his work; can give, with the freshness of youthful genius, as an old man, what in earlier years he had conceived in the moment of inspiration. But it is deeper, richer, more daring, and more successful, than we could have foreseen. Niels

Bryde had taken up a wrong impression, his flight of thought had not soared beyond the allegories and pageants of the first acts; now, however, as if he had looked at them in the glass of that clear, young spirit, he saw the whole of the great outline of these mighty conceptions, became charmed with them, and felt a strong desire to see with his own eyes, and enjoy them more than through their reflection in any mirror.

It might seem too much to say, that the sketch given to Niels by Esther of the contents of the second volume of "Faust," was, taken altogether, a comprehensive survey of that poem; but those who have not understood or remembered "Faust" better than Niels Bryde had done at that time, may not disdain to read Esther's outline of it. It is not her ideas we are to peruse, but the echo of the poet's thoughts, as she comprehended them. We will perceive how well she retained in the calm depths of her mind the impression made by his master-spirit.

This period of time, and the contents of a few pages, became of some importance, as influencing, in a degree, the life-history of Niels Bryde.

GOETHE'S "FAUST."—SECOND VOLUME.

The first act shows us "Faust at the Emperor's palace;" the jester there had disappeared, but Mephistopheles had taken his place, and had whispered to the sage of the palace, the Astrologer, mysterious words. Faust procures money to fill the empty treasury of

the state; makes life at the palace a continued carnival and scene of gaiety, in which the Emperor appears as the great Pan, and Faust as the god of riches, scattering about his gold; but that is a bad habit; no blessing attends on it. The Emperor longs for some other and newer entertainment, and desires that Faust should employ his skill to call up from the olden time that beauteous couple, Helen and Paris. Faust meets with opposition in this from Mephistopheles, who, however, at length gives way, and delivers to him the key of the kingdom of death, where "die Mütter" dwell in the empty, boundless space. It is to be a court drama; high-born, distinguished guests are invited to the imperial palace, where the theatre is erected. The audience assemble; Mephistopheles takes his place as prompter. A well-arranged dramatic representation is all that is expected, but something very different occurs. Faust raises the antique beauty in the very hour of romance, but falls in love himself with Helen, and his embracing her causes the whole pageant to vanish into air; Faust is cast senseless on the ground, where, in tumult and darkness, Mephistopheles seizes him.

"Da habt ihr's nun! mit Narren sich beladen

Das kommt zuletzt dem Teufel selbst zu Schaden."

The second act gives us Faust's dreamy state; then we are brought back to the realities of the world; we are again with Mephistopheles in the student's chamber, which stands unchanged from what it was in the

first volume of the poem, only that everything is covered with dust; the pen, with which Faust had signed the contract, is lying on the floor, filled with a drop of coagulated blood! Mephistopheles casts around him Faust's old fur cloak; the moths in it spring out, and sing in a loud chorus. "Der Schüler," whom we knew, in the first volume, humble, modest, listening to the great master who instructed him, and wrote in his album, comes now, like Baccalaureus, much further forward than Mephistopheles had expected. He has determined to become like God, and had advanced so far in his necromancy that, without his will, the Devil dared not exist. Wagner worked in his laboratory, and, with a compound of various materials, he created, or rather crystallized, a man, Homunculus, who had scarcely obtained life when the Devil entered. Where is the wise, lively, knowing, and yet but half-formed little man? He wanted nothing, and therefore he had to remain in his phial; there alone could he obtain his equipoise; he is not yet entirely become a material being, but he will be one; he thinks of himself, and even of Faust, who reposes in a dreamy state, and begs Mephistopheles to take up in his mantle the sleeping one. Homunculus flies joyfully before them, and guides them to the ancient world, the native country of Faust's *sense of beauty*, on to the classical Walpurgis night. Here Faust revives, and is carried away by his enthusiasm; for this is Greece—Helen has breathed that air; the sphinx reminds him of



Œdipus—the syrens, of Ulysses; he inquires about Helen, and Chiro takes him upon his back, once Helen's seat, and carries him to the daughter of Æsculapius, who conveys him to the realms of the dead. The earth trembles, Seismos rises, throwing up the rocks in the deep abyss—gold and various treasures roll forth. There is a hollow, rustling sound—the Pygmæi, the Dactyli, and the cranes of Ibycus mingle together—the Lamæ of the grave whirl in a dance round Mephistopheles—the devil of the middle ages—who could not at once feel himself at home on classical ground; though he soon perceived that on this land of beauty was to be found plenty of vampire-work; and he watched the disgusting Lamæ and the hideous daughters of Chaos. Homunculus hastened there willingly, to be more corporeally made. At the ocean's festival in the Ægean Sea, Proteus told him that he had only half come into the world, that he must leave his glass case, cast himself into the boundless waters, and there, passing through a thousand forms, raise himself into that of a perfect man. He followed this counsel, and was crushed against a throne of muscle-shells, in the depths of the ocean, at the joyous festival of Galathæa and the Nereides.

The third act is in Sparta; we are there at the palace of Menelaus, where Helen, with a number of captive Trojan females, has returned to the opulence she had forsaken, and which her consort increased; he had brought her thither, but during the whole long

journey he had not spoken a word to her, nor had he shown himself—she only knew his command that all was to be prepared for an offering. Phorcyas, the gray old housekeeper, rudely approaches her mistress, an angry chorus is then commenced ; Phorcyas announces the will of Menelaus ; the offering is to be Helen herself ! The beautiful princess is terrified, and asks if there be no mode of escape. The old woman knows but of one. Beyond the river Eurotus there is a mighty stranger to be found—Faust, who has raised a castle there ; Helen must seek refuge with him ; thither, enveloped in misty clouds, she and her followers are borne, and she is received as the mistress of the castle. Menelaus, with his squadrons, attack it, but are vanquished by the power of sorcery. There the antique beauty, Helen, and the Romantist of the middle ages, Faust, lived together, revelling in love and happiness. A lovely child, Euphorion, played and sang around them ; he was their joy, and yet a source of anxiety to them, for he rose like Icarus, and speedily did his earthly frame sink into the grave, whither he prayed his mother to follow him. She consented to do so, but her beauteous apparel remained behind, and dissolving in clouds it bore Faust away, while the chorus sang a requiem. Then rises Phorcyas, who is Mephistopheles, by whose necromantic power the whole had been created.

The fourth act brings us back again to realities, from Faust's dream. In clouds he is conveyed back to the

mountains of his home, to the emperor's country. He awakes strong and full of energy, and feels the wish for some employment, the desire to undertake some work of consequence, to check the encroachment of the sea, or engage in some great mental labour; but the whole empire has fallen into anarchy, a new regent rules there.

Faust espouses the cause of truth and justice, and, by his order, Mephistopheles, through the agency of the powers of nature, as assistant spirits, works in this good cause. The emperor recovers his throne, and bestows places and dignities on the chosen ones. At length the clergy interfere, the archbishop avers that the victory has been won through the powers of the Evil One, a church is built on the spot; the inhabitants of the valleys and the plains become vassals of the church; finally the clergy, as it were, swallow up the whole kingdom.

In the fifth act, after many peregrinations, a wanderer returns to his home, where two old people dwell peacefully and happily in a hut. They will not exchange this humble abode for the gorgeous mansion to which the mighty Faust has invited them, because their cottage spoils the view from his rich palace. Through his skill and power the sea has been forced back; meadows and woods won, towns built, great things performed. But Faust had now become an old man, wealthy and powerful, yet not powerful enough to compel the removal of the hut. Mephistopheles promises him that

it shall be done, and that the old people shall be transferred to a better place. At early morn there comes on the breeze the smell of fire; the hut has vanished, the old people were burned in it. Faust is shocked, for he had not wished this. "It will go to your account," said the Evil One to him. At night four gray old women came to his palace; they were WANT, GUILT, SORROW, and DISTRESS. That was no place for them, but Sorrow slipped in through the key-hole, and took up her abode with Faust, in the splendid house; he felt sadness and care. She breathed upon his eyes, and he became blind; but internally he grew more enlightened, and he incited his people to labour. The noxious, unhealthy swamps were drained and dried up, the land recovered from the sea was cultivated till it became fertile soil. To stand upon free ground, surrounded by a free people, had been the ruling desire of his life, and on its fulfilment his earthly career was at an end. Mephistopheles, with his train of demons, wished to seize the departing spirit, but at that instant a host of heavenly beings appear; at that sight Mephistopheles feels as a cat does when longing to catch some birds; the angels looked so delicate and inviting, he tried to catch them, and in this pursuit he forgot for a moment his spiritual booty. Fragrant blossoms were showered around him, the power of evil was not potent enough to scatter these, they burned Mephistopheles as they touched him, but being a devil he could not be consumed; he struggled among the

roses, and, during the combat, the angels had carried away Faust's undying part, and the spirits of hell were forced, in mighty wrath, to sink back to their dark abyss. A seraphic chorus is heard ; infants who had died at their birth flutter over the plains of earth, but they long for more celestial beauty, and wing their way to higher spheres. Spirits of repentant women appear, and amidst these is "Gretchen ;" she prays to be allowed to join her child, who was almost dazzled with the new day ; and, after her, Love wafts Faust up towards GRACE. Faust during his earthly life has failed and sinned, but as his spirit's inclination had always led him to seek truth and goodness through the Beautiful, he had a claim to be raised by Love to the realms of Grace.

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Such was Esther's mode of gathering into one picture, for Niels Bryde, the poem of Faust ; she had given the thread, the connection of the whole, much better than many older reviewers would have done. He looked with surprise at the young girl, who possessed so peculiar and superior a mind, and who little resembled others of her sex and age. As there are in the world several more real poets than those who commit their thoughts and feelings to paper, so are there also many women more intellectual than even a Rachel, a Madame de Stäel, or a George Sand, but circumstances do not bring them so prominently before

the world. Often, indeed, it is that only a single individual even of an intimate circle sees fully into so uncommon a mind. How different was not Esther from the other two girls in that wealthy family ! How did this happen—how does this same dissimilarity occur in the vegetable world ? One sometimes sees, away in the woods, a rare plant, mixing with the commoner ones : they spring from the same soil, they have the same air, the same sunshine—yet that *one* is so different from the rest !

We have, sculptured in marble by Jerichau, the statue of a young female slave in chains ; there is something in the countenance so full of intelligence, that it seems to animate the very stone, and the beauty of the face is only to be equalled by the grace of the figure. One might have fancied that the sculptor had moulded a likeness of Esther, exactly at her age. The full, earnest eyes, eloquent with thought and imagination, were hers ; one felt fascinated by them. Perhaps one might have expected a representation of silent sorrow, but the whole countenance seems irradiated with a charming smile which plays around the beautiful lips, almost as speaking as the eyes, and which appear to say, “I am safe—I am happy, on this flowing ocean of life.”

From that hour Niels Bryde looked with very different thoughts, and much increased interest, at Esther. He read the second volume of Faust the

very same evening, and with more pleasure, in consequence of the sketch she had made of it for him.

In Faust himself he found a nature portrayed that was very similar to his own; *he* also strained every nerve, battled on, and would have given himself even to the powers of evil, if thus he could have won the footing he craved, and elevated himself higher. In striving for the beautiful, the true, the good, the earthly part might indeed be led into error, but the deathless part will live triumphant at last! Goethe added to Christian humanity, the beauty of the antique world: he was a man of Olympus, but had taken a higher degree in light than the classical sages of old, inasmuch as that the bright rays from the Sun of Christianity streamed around him.

The interest which had been recently awakened in Niels' mind, in perusing "Faust," caused Goethe, like Shakespeare, to become his favourite reading for relaxation from graver studies; with both these authors, women are described as exerting the noblest influence in this world. There is an old fable, that the tempestuous wind was determined to blow the cloak from the person of a traveller, but he only wrapped himself up the closer in it; then came the sun, with his genial warm rays, the heat oppressed the man, he first loosened, and finally voluntarily cast off his cloak. Thus—the woman's power is that of the sun, and all great poets have felt and admitted this; therefore

the woman shines in Shakespeare's "King Lear," "Coriolanus," "Viola," "The Merchant of Venice;" and thus also in Goethe's "Tasso" and "Egmont," but still more delightfully in "Faust," it seemed to him, wherein she, as Love, ascends before him, leading the way to Grace.

Of what importance is not woman! Niels Bryde thought of this as he looked back, and around him; his mother, so poor and so hardworking, how well he remembered the expression of her eyes when, as she lay speechless and almost dead in their little room, he placed the Bible near her lips! a world of love, a mother's anxious love, lay therein; he comprehended what she had once been to him—Bodil, his sister, at the Jutland heath—that faithful kind creature, so amiable and so affectionate! How well he remembered her mild, consolatory words, when suspected, hurt, and in a state of almost wild delirium, he lay miserable among the heather! How many traits of her goodness of heart arose before him! It was she who had opened his eyes to the beauties of nature, even on that brown heath. She, the sympathising sister in happy and in trying hours: even now she was grieving for him, he well knew, though she could not take his part and that of her parents at the same time.

His mother and Bodil—yes, these two formed the entire gallery of excellent women, whose influence he had ever owned during the career of his life. Little



Esther, the Jewess,—she had indeed started forward as interesting—a floweret in the bud ; how would that flower unfold itself ? Her clever programme sketch of the poem of “Faust” was more than a mere effort of youthful memory ; her life, passed among the world of books, in a luxurious house, in the midst of the bustle and noisy clamour of every-day existence, gave evidence of something remarkable in her mind and intellect. Whither would her imagination lead her ? He could not guess. She had profited much by the legacies of various philosophers and poets ; but when Niels began to remark her, she was soaring beyond him, who, in his self-sufficient vainglory, was becoming imbued with the doctrines of materialism. That belief, which he had cast off, was the greatest treasure of her heart ; she, the Jewish girl, bowed before the cross, before the Messiah, the Saviour, of whom the prophets and prophetic songs of the Old Testament spoke ; He who came into this world, who taught in it, and died, that every one who believed in Him should not be lost, but inherit eternal life !

Niels Bryde and the Israelite grandfather were the only two who had any idea of Esther’s uncommon intelligence. Her sisters, especially Rebecca, who passed for the clever one of the family, at least valued herself upon being such, thought only of her “bad habits,” for Esther had an awkward way of sitting at table.

Amalie, the other sister, had an admirer in Herr Brusz, therefore she raved about Scandinavia. And who was Herr Brusz ? A talented young theologian, very orthodox, but not over correct. Yes, this sounds oddly, yet such persons are to be found. His hobby was the greatness and verdure of the North. His raptures about the North interested Amalie. Esther was won by his descriptions of its grandeur ; and Rebecca—well—it was the verdure that took her fancy. Witty yet trivial, a strange mixture of contradictions was Herr Brusz ; bland and harsh, easy and obstinate, while he showed himself fanatical in his orthodoxy, and bigoted about his own church. His devotion to Northern antiquities made him, without intending it, mingle Christianity and Paganism, and name as if one and the same, Christ and Balder, Satan and Loke, the kingdom of Heaven and Gimle, Doom's-day and Ragnarokr.

Niels Bryde perceived often that this shocked Esther, but it did not escape him either that she listened with great interest when Herr Brusz discoursed with warmth and vivacity about the Northern heroic age, or recited some portions of the Edda. He recited well ; and one evening he gave them an outline of Njal's Saga, no poet could have done it better. But he could not please Niels Bryde, who found fault with his white and red complexion, declared that he dressed like a shopman, was very disagreeable with his soft, sneering smile, and unbearable from his enormous self-conceit,

a quality which certainly is insufferable to those who have a considerable portion of it themselves ; but this remark was not made by Niels Bryde.

It appeared to him that Esther showed almost as much interest in Herr Brusz as in himself ; he could not endure this, now that she had some value in his eyes—not in the way of love—he was too much of a spiritual Narcissus for that, but he could not endure it. Yet she was full of confiding regard for Niels Bryde ; there seemed to her to be but one barrier between them, it was that which lay nearest to her heart—her faith ; she appeared to feel by instinct, that *there* their views were very opposite.

“On the Nile grew the papyrus, whose leaves formed a cradle for Moses. How rich a burden, and yet how poor compared to that which the cross bore !” So spoke a voice in her heart. A conflict was going on there between Judaism and Christianity. To her dear and excellent grandfather, he to whom she had always been so much attached and so communicative from her childhood, she expressed in trembling accents her ideas and convictions ; and spoke of the new light which seemed to have dawned upon her ; and the extraordinary attraction which seemed to draw her towards Christianity. But he could not comprehend her feelings, and did not enter freely with her on the subject she had so much at heart. He hoped that, by his silence, and by want of encouragement, the fancy that engrossed her mind would die away ; that she

would resume her former way of thinking, and discard those ideas which must lead to discord in her family circle, not to speak of the observation she would draw upon herself from the public. He was proud of the people of Israel, who, under all persecutions, through all ages, had remained a peculiar people—the chosen of Jehovah—one God—great in his mercy as in his wrath. The old gentleman looked with a degree of anxiety, almost of pain, at his dear grand-daughter ; and she clung to him, with her arms round his neck, and burst into tears. But she soon raised her drooping head, and clasped her hands. What prayer was that she breathed ? Her lips uttered no sound, but her spirit said, “ Lord Jesus ! Cast me not off ! ”

## CHAPTER XVI.

## NO CHRISTIAN.

THE truth of the old saying—

“Two great ones in one sack  
Can never be contained!”

was corroborated by Herr Brusz and Niels Bryde, if these might be dubbed “great.” They were alike talented, alike vain ; and it was at the very point on which they were opposed to each other that they met. One day Herr Brusz gave a humorous douche and shower-bath to the sort of philosophy to which he thought Niels Bryde was favourable. Heiberg and Martensen, said Herr Brusz, had described this philosophy as “the golden calf,” round which the youth of Denmark now danced, after the dance had been discontinued in Germany, and they had discovered there the bad taste of the counterfeit metal.

Niels Bryde spoke of foolish preachers—“flowery trash,” or “stupidity interlarded with sentences from the Bible ;” “pearls awkwardly strung together.”

"You never enter a church," said Herr Brusz, except, perhaps, at a funeral, when you are following a corpse. I once heard you say something of this sort."

"I go to weddings also," replied Niels Bryde. "I heard there the other day about the number of beautiful presents the young couple would find awaiting them from their friends when they went home."

Thus they went on, always hitting at each other, until at last the lady of the house declared that Herr Brusz and Herr Bryde must no longer be asked together.

It is said in the Bible, that on the day of judgment we must give an account of every improper word ; and under this head must surely range every unkind word said of our absent neighbours. These are often uttered thoughtlessly, sometimes in anger, but they ascend upwards, and, perhaps, will stand as eternal blots in the record of our worldly career.

Thus, at least, had Esther understood something that Niels Bryde had said. She had latterly become a frequent visitor at the house of the widow of a professor named Ancker, an elderly lady, who was extremely benevolent, and of a truly Christian spirit. Esther spoke of her with much respect and regard.

"Yes, she is certainly a very worthy woman," said Niels Bryde. "It is a pity that she is somewhat deranged !"

"Deranged !" exclaimed Esther.

"Yes, she actually takes it for gospel, that the stars of heaven might fall on the earth, and lie there like withered leaves."

"She believes it because it is in the Bible," said Esther.

"But that she can believe and repeat in earnest things which are in direct opposition to all common sense is insanity."

"So you may think, but she does not," replied Esther; and, she added, "I do not consider that any one has a right to condemn another's belief on religious matters."

"So my rational little Esther is going to argue the matter!" said Niels Bryde; smiling at the decided expression of her young face. "You, who are well aware both of the distance and magnitude of the stars must know how our little earth would be crushed and annihilated by stars falling on it—how *can* they?—it is absolute folly."

"But what if your knowledge were folly?" said Esther.

"Bravo!" cried Niels Bryde. "Snow is black, coal is white; let us play at arguing."

"No, I will not attempt to argue with you," said Esther, "but you are no true Christian!" and, as she looked at him, there was an expression in her eye which Niels Bryde did not know how to interpret. It was severe, yet mild, while round her mouth played a calm smile.

"I am not one of those Christians who believe impossibilities," he said.

"To God nothing is impossible," she replied; "that is my belief; and I know not a better one."

"Nothing impossible!" repeated Niels Bryde. "It is impossible for Him to act contrary to everything that is reasonable! He cannot make that which has been created become uncreated—He cannot love evil—cannot lie! I can give you proofs enough of this in the Bible itself. I do not understand you; what are your ideas, what do you *really* believe?"

"That you are not a Christian!" she said, decidedly, and left the room.

"I not a Christian!" he said to himself. "Well, certainly according to *her* acceptation of the term, I am not. But will she become one? Is this strength of mind, or weakness? Can it be only the love of opposition? Humph! I have, perhaps, over-rated her understanding."

These contending and somewhat disparaging thoughts were not much in favour of Esther, and yet he felt himself wonderfully attracted towards her. He fancied that she was, to a certain extent, a materialist, that her strong clear mind sought to reconcile all things to reason; he had seen in her a Danish Bettina, and in himself a Goethe.

When he was a child, and lived with his parents up in the round tower—he sat there—the resemblance was formerly remarked—as the Elf and the little



Marie sat in the immense tree, which grew up so suddenly from the seed they had put into the earth. As a child, it was on the magic tree of fancy that he had raised himself up, and from whence he looked out over the whole of Copenhagen, and flew dreaming, with the swallows, up towards the sparkling stars, which, however, he could not reach, for they were so far off that it would take more than the flight of a hundred years to approach them ! Now, science had laid its potent seed in the soil, the tree of knowledge grew and grew, and far up at its top he sat, and looked over the earth—into the whole universe. He had learned that the tones, which so often agitate the hearts of human beings, are but vibrations in the air ; that the glorious floating red clouds are but damp vapour, the bright unbounded air itself, but a trembling in the atmosphere. Through the medium of his knowledge he saw the whole of this seeming magnificence but as dull and dead. He knew that the nerves of the eye are stimulated by certain refractions which we call beauty, as they please us, in the same way that the taste is stimulated by certain articles of food. “That the work of our brain is the foundation and condition of our being” was his conviction ; and he believed that, as sound is occasioned by the agitation and commotion of the air, so every humour and every feeling takes its rise in the brain, that terra-incognita ; the phosphor, which Feuerbach had taught him, shone like a light in and around his vision, the presumption and self-suf-

iciency of youth—which lead to many vices as well as to many virtues, gave him a sense of enjoyment, that did not feel the necessity for renovation or continuance ; the passing minutes were all in all with him, he was wrapt up in them, and had no thought of, no desire for, eternity. That and God disappeared in the contemplation of his *I*. Some of the books that he read made so great an impression upon him, that he seemed to have adopted their dogmas as his own ; we will give a specimen of one of these works.

“ Der Mensch allein ist und sei unser Gott, unser Vater, unser Richter, unser Erlöser, unsere wahre Heimath, unser Gesetz und Maasz, das A und O unseres staatsbürgerlichen und sittlichen, unseres öffentlichen und häuslichen Lebens und Strebens. Kein Heil auszer dem Menschen.” \*

He perceived that everything created was so judiciously arranged, that he thought it might be possible to understand the arrangement, possible even to produce it—if one had the necessary knowledge. The alchemist might be able to make gold, diamonds could be formed, if only the process were known which brought about their existence ; even human beings themselves might be put together by an arrangement of organic powers, and life breathed into them. Goethe, he declared, had certainly entertained the same idea, whence originated his Homunculus in *Faust*. It was very probable that under the improvement of the

\* F. Feuerbach.

human race which the progress of time might bring forth, mankind might "become like God." So far had Niels Bryde gone !

Meanwhile the world went on in its usual way. The history of the world—that stalactite cavern of casualties—grew larger and larger. It was pleasant to look down upon it from the tree of knowledge.

" Were all the kings on earth to take  
Their utmost strength and power,  
Do what they might, they could not make  
The common nettle's flower." \*

Niels Bryde, with all his wisdom, could not attain to the knowledge of the construction even of the humblest leaf, or inanimate stone ; and could he even have been able to have dissolved by some chemical process a block of marble, and put it together again to form a substance, he knew not what external genius might chisel from it. Blocks of stone have been the same in former ages as now ; but Phidias, Praxiteles, Thorwaldsen, were the external powers—the creative spirits. From the same marble might be formed the group of the Laocoon, the Venus de Medici, and the Ganymede.

The great masters can chisel life-like figures from the lifeless stone ; but Niels Bryde thought by his science to go further, to construct men themselves, could he but discover how to blend the materials.

\* H. A. Brorson.

“Auf Mischung kommt es an!”

Goethe makes Wagner say in *Faust*, when, in the phial, a Homunculus was produced.

In the fulness of time shall be seen, what we men with all our wisdom cannot foretell. We behold the marble blocks, but know not what they may be worked into.

Sounds of uproar broke forth from that city on the Seine, where once Louis XIV. reigned in all his blended magnificence and emptiness; where stood Napoleon's imperial throne, surrounded with the trophies of victory, and the Marseillaise hymn made the heart beat with thoughts of fatherland. Where the citizen king, Louis Philippe, free and bold for a time, suddenly bowed his head, and his part being over, escaped with his family from France, and, as a fugitive, sought the shores of England.

A sigh for freedom—deep and prolonged—was heard from land to land: the mass of the people wished, at the cost of blood, to win that precious liberty for which the children of the age were not yet ripe. “To be, or not to be!” The words of Hamlet became the people's question in a worldly point of view.

Enthusiasm, passion, selfishness, and hatred, danced their Bacchanalian death-dance through the towns of Germany, over the plains of Hungary, and in northern Italy's fruitful provinces; a peal rang throughout the

countries of Europe, and reached even to Denmark, with its green isles and Jutland lakes ! .

Law and justice were on the side of the Danes ; but sympathy is like a deep spring in the earth ; where *it* bursts forth, the waters dash over our boundaries and limits.

Like a ruinous inundation, these desolating sympathies, these dreams of freedom, these needless changes, swept along. War broke out—a war so sad ! Brother stood in the ranks against brother—kindred fought against kindred !

Then followed days of woe—days of trial, bitter, heavy for those who were not Christians !

## CHAPTER XVII.

JULIUS ARONS.

ON the banks of the Eyder, the trumpet's call and the roll of the drum were heard. In Jutland and "the green isles" the torch of enthusiasm was kindled; it blazed over the land, and but one thought, one wish, pervaded all hearts. "Everything for our just cause!" The peasant girl took off her betrothment-ring and gave it; and she gave, in silence, her heart's best treasure with it. Rich and poor, peasant and noble, voluntarily joined the ranks. Delicately-nurtured, elegant young gentlemen, who had graced the gay saloons of the capital, went forth of their own free-will, and were soon standing in the trenches.

Julius Arons, who had latterly become dull and listless—from excess of pleasures, and having worn himself out with his youthful gaiety—who had been *blasé*, as some of his friends called it, resumed his former animation, and regained his spirits. He awoke to new interests in life—he must do his part—now that

there was something to be done. It is probable that he, as well as some others of the young men, who volunteered on the spur of the moment to serve in the army, had not reflected on what would be expected of them—to what fatigue, want, and other trials, they were about to expose themselves; but though there might have been a few whose motives were not, perhaps, thoroughly defined, the greater number were actuated by the most patriotic feelings and the deepest enthusiasm.

Julius and Esther bore, as we know, a strong resemblance to each other in looks—one could see immediately that they were brother and sister; and their dispositions were alike also in some points, though in intellectual endowments and cultivation of mind, they were very different. They were much attached to each other, and it was Esther who had aroused her brother's enthusiasm, and spurred him on to fight for his country; willingly would she have done the same herself; happy and blessed would she have deemed herself could she have followed Julius to the battle-field, to have given him attendance and solace, if he should stand in need of either. Rebecca and Amalie spoke most about the number of "*distinguished*" young men who were going to the seat of war, and how well the uniform became Julius. Niels Bryde had already been appointed an assistant-surgeon, and it so happened that he and Julius Arons had both entered the same regiment.

"Be a faithful friend to my brother," whispered Esther to Niels Bryde, when the hour of parting came; "I know that you will," she added, as she pressed his hand, and looked, with her soul in her eyes, at him; tears were in them for her brother; perhaps, for him—the friend.

The mother and sisters had gone by the railway to Roeskilde, to take there their final leave; also the father, Herr Arons, of whom we have heard so little, except that he gave the money for Julius and Herr Bryde's journey to Dresden and Prague. He was generally at his office, or on the exchange; but to-day he had accompanied his family to the place where Julius, in his red jacket, stood among his comrades: the father's eye was wet for a moment; one embrace, and they separated, for the troops were about to march, and *he* had to hurry back to the Exchange. There were sadness, solemnity, gaiety, and tears;—there was poetry in the moment. The soldier, in his red jacket, embraced the elegantly-dressed young lady—pocket-handkerchiefs waved—the locomotive puffed farewell—and the troops sang Kaalund's song:—

"Arouse thee, every Dane!"

Thus ran the verse:—

"We are not by hate or defiance impelled,  
'T is for Denmark we 'll fight side by side!  
They would seize on the land that so long we have held,  
And brother from brother divide!"



The air rang with hurras, the chorus was almost drowned amidst the shouts, the railway's shrill whistle could just be heard; it ceased—and they were gone! So goes the wheel of life!

The strong feelings that were called into existence, the novelty, the uncertainty, bestowed on that moment a lustre, a poetry, owing to which the heavy mist of every day was forgotten, the pressure of the times unheeded.

Warriors who came forth as to a tilting-match at a tournament, in strange, fantastic dresses, with death-heads painted on their breasts, crowds of volunteers, and many disciplined troops, met and opposed the Danes at Bau. Bravely did they fight, and desperate was the courage they showed; but they were soon abandoned by those who had led them to the combat. There was no one to take the supreme command—there was no union; they were surrounded, vanquished, and eight hundred prisoners were sent to Copenhagen.

The whole of the Duchy of Sleswig lay open to the Danes; the king, who had visited Als, had made his public entry into Flensburg, which adhered to the Danish cause. All this belongs to history and to our reminiscences. Fortune seemed to declare in favour of the Danes; they attacked the town of Sleswig; many a heart beat heavily—brother fought against brother. Error and mistaken sympathy were ranged against duty and right; many Danes felt what the

great magnate of science, the Danish philosopher, Hans Christian Örsted, said in song—

“That the foe was our brother how deeply we feel,  
For centuries severed by none ;  
He has forced us himself to arms to appeal ;  
We will fight till our cause be won !”

In that detachment of Danish troops which first entered the town of Sleswig were the friends Julius Arons, as a non-commissioned officer, and Niels Bryde, as an assistant-surgeon. An unpleasant stillness pervaded the town ; the weather was gloomy and wet ; few of the inhabitants showed themselves in the streets. Many families shut themselves up. Official claims were attended to ; but dark countenances were seen, and sullen words were heard, even among the servants. Niels Bryde was quartered in a house where a young lady, named Hibernia, was the only one who made her appearance. She had a thorough hatred to the Danes, and was most inveterate against them ; but she was beautiful and energetic. She thus addressed Niels Bryde :—

“Copenhagen is altogether Scandinavian ; it bows down before Norway and Sweden in order to form a part of a greater whole. Among them there are sympathy, nationality, similarity of language. But have we not the same rights ? We bow before that great Fatherland, whose language we speak, from whence we derive our customs, and with which are

our sympathies. It is now time that we should separate from your people, and unite ourselves to our own."

"Well, then, let them evacuate our Danish Sleswig," said Niels Bryde. "South of the town stands that ancient frontier wall, 'Thyras Vold,' once before a defence against foreign supremacy. Here formerly, in the olden time, the Danish language was the one spoken, though latterly only among the common people; because, if one pretended to gentility, it was necessary to learn German; thus it became the fashion to speak that language. Victories, however, and treaties on the return of peace, must also be taken into account."

In this way they conversed, each convinced of being in the right, and both sometimes angry. As Niels Bryde gazed on her flashing, beautiful eyes, his vehemence would give way to good-humour.

"I have an idea," he said, laughing. "The greatest champion with us for everything Danish, is old Grundtvig; with you, for everything German, old Arndt; these two are pretty much on a par; both are poets, both carry their opinions to extremes. I should like that the contending powers should agree to select these two warriors, and send them forth; that they should meet, and, according to the most approved ancient fashion, should fight a duel at Sprogö, in the Great Belt, about the languages and nationality, and, after the result was known, that we others should

all fall upon each other's necks, and—all would go right !”

“Can you jest at a time like the present ?” exclaimed Hibernia, turning crimson.

“Yes, thank God, I can,” said he ; “and I shall continue to do so with all foes in petticoats who attack me.”

Hibernia blushed as she looked at him. She did not deign any reply, but the expression of her eyes told of earnestness, anger, and a desire for revenge ; yet she was a noble, high-hearted German lady—she breathed only for that land—

“Where Luther saw the light, and Goethe sang.”

There was something in her appearance and manners that made a great impression on Niels Bryde. He did not look at her with indifference ; hatred he did not feel towards her, neither did he feel love ; but he felt a most unaccountable interest in her—his enemy—his declared enemy—who had said without circumlocution “I hate you !” Were they often to meet ?

The songs of the Danish soldiers were heard in the streets—they sang about “Thyras Vold.”

“Denmark, lovely, smiling plain,  
Encircled by the billows blue.”

Hibernia's cheek flushed, her eyes seemed to become larger and more brilliant, she gave a contemptuous toss of her head, and left the room.

The strength of the enemy was centered in Holstein.

“The Easter bells were chiming.”

The Danish troops were on their way to church, when the roll-call of the drums was heard, and within half an hour the advanced guard had met the enemy at Bustorf. The battle soon raged within the town of Sleswig itself, fire blazed from the houses and gardens on the south side. The gable walls fell in, and the flames rose higher and higher. The thunder of the cannons roared far and near, and mingling with it were heard the whizz of the bullets through the air—the rolling of the waggons, the blasts of the trumpets, and the beat of the drums.

When Niels Bryde and his company passed the house where he had been quartered, he saw Hibernia at the open window. She had a couple of muskets by her side ; her hand grasped a dark red and gilded flag, which she waved from the window with a triumphant smile. A shot was heard. Niels Bryde fancied he also heard a scream ; and he saw her either sink down or move back. He was marching, and could not stop to see if anything had happened.

A day of battle—the first Niels Bryde had ever witnessed—followed. As if into the midst of a gigantic crushing death-machine he went, and faithfully performed his duty.

On the border of the wood stood a house ; from all

its windows and doors guns were pointed; shot fell after shot; the hedges and inclosures bristled with gleaming arms; muskets and bayonets did their work of death; the heavy white sabre clove helmet and skull; the bodies of friends and foes lay mingling together on the bloody ground. Here, horses startled by the battle's din, shied and became restive; there, cannons sank in the deep mire of the road. Niels Bryde went with the hospital vans in amidst the ranks, moved away the wounded, bandaged, amputated. There was no room, no time. The whole scene appeared like a wild, fearful dream; no one could spare a moment for thought or meditation; the great wheel of death was swiftly turning, while death itself crawled over the slimy ground as worms crawl.

“Danes! Close your columns, and stand fast!  
God gives the victory at last!”\*

The town of Sleswig, and the palace of Gottorp, the whole of the battle-field, were in the hands of the enemy. For nine hours the conflict had raged furiously; but night at length separated the combatants, and the troops bivouacked in Idsted Wood, and Cathrine Wood. Several of the surgeons, who during the battle had been in the hospitals at Sleswig, were detained there as prisoners of war. Niels Bryde, whose post of duty had kept him on the outside of the town, sat now with his comrades, somewhat fatigued,

\* Ploug.

indeed, but with dauntless courage, before the great blazing watch-fire, that lighted up the leafless trees of the forest. Around lay knots of soldiers, the numerous red uniforms, the artistic grouping contrasting well with the gloom beyond, which hung like a dark heavy veil over the wood. It rained the whole night. The baggage-waggons drove about among the trees, and rations were distributed. All that had taken place in the course of the day was now ascertained; and the communications of individuals gave connection to the stirring details of the day's terrible work.

Niels Bryde was meanwhile called away to the little inn at Idsted, where the general and his staff were quartered, some of them severely wounded. He rode thither in the pouring rain. The commander-in-chief occupied a low, close room, where only a small tallow candle glimmered on a dirty wooden table. In a tap-room up-stairs lay the wounded whose wounds were to be dressed—a sound as if of groaning came from thence. Niels Bryde afforded all the assistance he could. It was long past midnight when he had finished his labours: and, much fatigued, he looked about for some place of rest. To find this he proceeded to another taproom below, which, like the one above stairs, was quite full. Many slept upon the floor, a few had taken possession of benches, and the very chest of drawers had been converted into a bed. On it lay or sat a man in a deep sleep. Niels Bryde

scrambled over those who were on the floor nearest to it, and endeavoured to find room on a portion of the chest of drawers that appeared unoccupied. He looked at the sleeper, and beheld the countenance of a friend—a well-known face, but pale, suffering, exhausted-looking—it was Julius Arons! He was sound asleep, and Niels Bryde would not wake him. He felt much tired himself, and gently removing his friend's legs a little to one side, he managed to find in the corner a place for himself to sit. He took a long draught from his flask, and then fell asleep by the side of Julius. But his repose was not of long duration: at two o'clock in the morning, the second day in Easter week, the troops were called up from their bivouac, and marched silently towards Flensburg.

Niels slept soundly; one of his comrades had to awake him, and when he started up he remembered his friend—but Julius Arons was gone! Perhaps he had not observed that the person sleeping by his side was Niels Bryde, he was already on the march. The rain was still falling in torrents; it was a laborious journey, almost entirely over deep, sandy moors.

To cover the movements of the retiring army, when it was found out that the enemy were passing on towards Slien, a dragoon regiment and a corps of riflemen were ordered to remain at Oversö. The horses had been taken from the artillery-waggon's to be fed, when a peasant gave notice that the enemy were approaching in three columns. A number of the rifle-



men had to cast themselves into a bog ; the Mecklenburg dragoons bore down on the poor fellows, who were worn out after the prolonged battle of the previous day, and the cold night passed upon the wet ground. Yet they held their own, and fought bravely in the midst of water and fire. The Goslar jägers joined the Mecklenburghers, and for two hours the unequal combat lasted. Victory was not to be won—help from their own troops not to be hoped for ; all that they had to do was to sacrifice themselves in order to arrest the progress of the enemy until the main body of the army could reach Flensburg. From knoll to knoll in the morass sprung, amidst clouds of smoke, the Danish riflemen ; some missed their footing, and sunk deeply in, never again to behold daylight ; it was not until there was merely a handful of men left that their commander ordered the white signal of submission to be displayed. But the principal part of the army were by this time under cover ; they had reached Flensburg, its citizens had gone out to meet them, carrying refreshments for them, and now food and rest awaited them in their allotted quarters. Bryde and Arons did not meet, nor did they seek each other ; like everybody else, they were both too tired to make the least unnecessary exertion.

Then rushed dragoons into the town with intelligence of the surprise and defeat at Oversö, and that the enemy were marching on the town. The wearied, overworked troops mustered quickly—the excitement

was great. The inhabitants of the town, in fear of the superior forces of the enemy, were anxious to get rid of the Danes. "Make haste!—prepare yourselves!" was the cry from well-wishers and those who were not so. Several battalions marched forth in good order, but a great number stopped on the way in gloom and confusion. Bau was their destination. The rain continued to pour down heavily, and the straw which had been brought for their night's lodgings from the adjacent farms, was soon soaked through. The main body of the troops were to proceed to Sundevad; and now, the third rainy night, they were at first ordered to bivouack on Dyppelbiorg; but it was found that this would utterly unfit them for fighting, if taken by surprise, and therefore they were sent on by boats to Als.

Julius Arons was ill; the extreme exertions and fatigues of these days and nights had been too much for one hitherto accustomed to such an easy, luxurious life: he had been sent to the hospital at Augustenborg.

The squadrons of the enemy overran the whole of the Duchy of Sleswig; and in every town, where German influence or sympathies prevailed, joyous sounds were heard, flowers were strewed in their way, and the dark red, gilded flag waved. The little Als-sound was the only separation between the combatants. The enemy advanced into Jutland; the blaze of its fires was seen all the way over at Funen, when the grenades

were cast from Fredericia, and burned the ferry-house at Strib; from Snogh i also, several houses at Middlefart were set on fire.

The head-quarters of the Danes was at Als. Niels Bryde was in Sönderborg, when information was brought to him from the hospital at Augustenborg, that Julius Arons was there, dangerously ill with typhus fever. Though it was late in the evening when Niels received this message, he immediately threw himself on horseback, and rode the long distance which intervened between the two places. As he approached the palace, he saw light streaming from all the windows, as in former times, when a grand feast was taking place. Now it was the lights in the sick-rooms, where, in many cases, the light of life was fading away. Everything in the rooms stood untouched, as when the Danish troops had entered the building, but the rich saloons of the palace had become the abode of suffering.

Julius was lying perfectly quiet; he was very pale and thin; but now his resemblance to Esther was even more striking than ever. Niels Bryde sat by his bedside, and gazed on him. At length his pulse beat less feebly; he opened his eyes, looked wildly about him, and began to talk rapidly of the dark wood, of funeral piles, and of lovely women. No sculptor could have chiselled more beautiful, undraped, dancing Bacchantes, than he described. They were the thoughts of one familiar with Goethe's Italian sonnets. Sud-

denly he fancied himself snatched from among the dancing throng, and thrown upon the pile to burn there. He became much excited, and uttered a loud cry. Ice was applied to his head to cool it; he grew calm again, and lay quiet for half an hour, but breathing heavily. When again he opened his eyes, he fixed them upon Niels Bryde, whom he now recognised.

"I am very ill, indeed," he said, "but I shall not die; it is so pleasant to live." And he looked at his friend with an anxious expression, as if his life depended upon his answer.

"You will be better," said Niels Bryde. "You are better already than you were a few moments ago."

"Better!" repeated Julius, and lay still again for a short time, but holding Niels Bryde's hand fast in his. "Do you believe," asked the invalid, "that there is another life after death?"

The words were spoken so earnestly, so anxiously, that Niels, who did not believe in a future life, was much affected by them. He made no reply. The question was a painful one. He could not give an answer contrary to his convictions, yet there, at that moment, to say "No, I do not believe it," he found impossible.

"Another life after death?" repeated Julius, in weak, inquiring tones.

"The Christians think so," said Niels Bryde, involuntarily.

"Yes!" whispered the dying Julius, "and so Esther says!" His head drooped, and his eyes closed, never more to open.

It was late at night—all was hushed around; only the subdued moaning of the sick men was to be heard. Niels Bryde sprang up—he was sitting by a death-bed—his friend was no more!

Deeply distressed, he rode back in the cold gray dawn to Sønderborg; he thought upon death, as he had never before thought of it—the final moment—"when the machine ceases to move, when the phosphor in the brain is extinguished, and the various parts fall from each other—"

"TO BE, OR NOT TO BE!" he said, with Hamlet, but did not add, "To sleep, perchance to dream!"

He considered that all was over. "The materials returned to what they were originally."

Like music, whose tones are often echoed in our souls, he remembered the days he had spent in the past with his friend, whose life now "was only in the recollection of those who outlived him." That thought was not exactly calculated to elevate the mind.

"NOT TO BE," was his belief.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

For days and weeks had been planned an attack on Sundevad, and a descent on Helgencæs, above Aarhuus, when one morning unexpectedly the Danish flag was seen to wave from the fortress of Fredericia; General Wrangel, who, at that time, had levied a contribution of four millions on Jutland, quitted it in great haste, having received orders to this effect. The joyful intelligence soon reached Als.

On the 28th May, at noon, the Danish troops went through Sundevad. This is not the place to give a history of the war in Sleswig, it is only the workings of an individual mind we are depicting, and in doing this, we are of necessity obliged to speak of those days of trial and of glory, and mingle with the ranks of the combatants. Niels Bryde was, in his profession, active, skilful, and most conscientious.

With bands playing, and banners waving, with song and lively chat, as if going to a festival, the troops passed the bridge. They were longing to meet the enemy. The sun shone brightly, the woods were green, the

beech-trees were putting forth their soft leaves, and the fields and hedges were in all the fresh verdure of spring. Primroses and wild thyme grew in rich profusion, and scented the air, every breath of which was mild, the birds carolled joyously, and a couple of storks had flown into the place near Dyppelmölle, where the enemy, prepared for battle, had taken up their position. A sabbath peacefulness seemed to pervade everything around, all nature looked blythe and glad in its young spring garb ; but how many eyes that now gazed on its fair scenes, before the sun went down, might be closed for ever ! How many cheeks, glowing that morn in health and ardour, might be cold and pale in death ere that day were numbered with the past !

The combat soon began ; the firing was kept up hotly from Dyppelmölle, by the enemy, while the Danish soldiers rushed upon them with their bayonets ; how their blades flashed in the sun, until the masses of smoke obscured all around ! Before the enemy's centre and right wing were routed, and forced back to Rübbel, lay unheeded, killed and wounded, friends and foes, like trampled down worthless weeds. The shots and shells fell in all directions ; the thatched roofs of the neighbouring cottages were in flames, bombs were bursting, startled horses were breaking from their harness and traces, cannons were roaring, and the storming parties were pressing on. The ambulance-waggons did not stop at the outer ranks only, but advanced into the midst of the conflict, to carry away

the wounded. Niels Bryde was here, a leading spirit, cool in the midst of danger.

Darkness fell upon all at length: it was half-past nine o'clock at night before the battle ended. The hospital vans left the field—but no Niels Bryde was with them. Who, in the midst of a bloody fray, thinks of any one individual? When last he was seen, he was standing upon a wall of enclosure, from whence the Danish soldiers were firing on the enemy.

It was now almost midnight, and the moon was shining brightly; the Danish troops were stationed near Gravensteen.

While Niels Bryde had stood on the wall, he had felt a sudden dart of pain in his chest, like the sting of a hornet; he experienced a shock, that seemed to make him tremble in every limb; he tottered, and fell forwards into a deep ditch beneath, which was almost concealed by the bramble and luxuriant hazel-bushes. All became black before his eyes, and the thread of consciousness that connected him with this world seemed to have snapped. He was in the transition to "a thing," as he himself would have said; but that *something*, which is powerful in us, resumed its sway, and made the pulse beat and the eyes open again. All was silence around, and the moon was shining clearly. He became sensible of the dampness of the grass, and he fancied he still heard the whizzing of the bullets, and expected that horses, passing by, would tread on him. He shuddered at the thought that a victorious



foe, in wanton cruelty, might thrust his sharp bayonet into his body, perhaps into his eyes; he fancied he saw one leaning over and glaring on him, who, half dead, lay there, powerless to protect or assist himself, more helpless than one of the brute creation; bound to the soil like the plant that grew on it—living upon the air and the falling dew—death seemed to have rooted him to the earth! His wound smarted; he had revived to outward impressions, but everything seemed to be gliding by him in a sort of chaotic confusion. Yet over all this chaos stood clearly out one thought, mightier than all his other sensations, a dread—such as he had never before felt—a dread of annihilation.

As one, who is full of life, shudders and draws back involuntarily from the brink of an unfathomable abyss, a degree of terror now thrilled through him. Was it weakness of body—illness—fever—that made him feel this dread, in another moment to become extinct? Powerless, as one sometimes seems in a dreadful dream, he lay there, faint, exhausted—he, who in his daring presumption had thought to elude God and immortality.

Yesterday, nearly at the same hour, how very different had been the scene around him, the sounds he heard, the circumstances in which he was placed! He was then at Sönderborg, in the midst of friends and comrades, at a festive meeting. It was the eve of a battle. Patriotic songs were sung, goblets of punch

and wine were drained to healths and toasts; there was a cordiality, a vivacity, a security—youth's careless trust in the rolling balls of fate.

"To-morrow, perhaps for many of us the path of life will be cut short, all will be over!" Such were Niels Bryde's thoughts for a moment, but they passed quickly and lightly through his mind; it never occurred to him that his own name, perhaps, might be inscribed on the dark tablets of death.

His ideas, his conviction, said, "Mankind, as well as the lower animals, are machines; thought is the result of organisation, in the same way that tones from musical instruments are produced by touch or breath on certain arrangement of materials. We have souls, we say; but what is a *soul* other than a common name for the various functions that belong to, and emanate from, the central system of the nerves, which we call the brain. As sound is the production of agitation and vibration in the air, so are thought, feelings, tones, the work of the brain. Destroy the body, and the functions, which we call soul, cease to exist. Yes; this is what we dignify by the name of our immortal part! Believe me, we are no more masters of ourselves and our reason, than we are masters over our material parts, which withdraw themselves from our bodies. Our voices come in the same way that our blood circulates, and therefore, I dare to believe and to assert, that no more responsibility rests with us than with the lower animals, though we are accustomed to

make them obey us. Man joining man—the unity of I and you—that is omnipotence. In order to obtain this, given laws must direct what is right ; association is necessary, and we must become subordinates to be what is better ! ”

All these ideas, which had been long cherished by him, crowded on his mind, as he lay there, weak, helpless, and forgotten.

“ Mankind is but an effort of nature ; the vanishing production of a moment in the circulation of life.” Such was, and had long been, his opinion, and in this belief he had felt a pride in rising above the narrow-minded faith to which the multitude clung—that there is a Deity, and an immortal life ; he fancied he could disprove both ! Why, then, did he now feel that shuddering terror of annihilation ? Was this only the delirium of fever—the result of the body’s suffering ? All around, scattered over that bloody field, lay the dying, supported by their belief in the immortality of the soul—comforted by the hope in God !

Thirst was his most powerful bodily feeling, his parched mouth craved for a drop of water ; but his spiritual thirst was still stronger. One drop from the pure fountain of faith would have yielded incalculable refreshment and strength. His thoughts might have been profound, but they were not pious ; even on the confines of death, the question “ to be, or not to be,” presented itself to him ; he repeated not the Lord’s Prayer, but the dogmas of his false philosophy, “ Man

is a production of parents and nurses, of art and time, of breath and air, of sound and light, of food and clothes! And the superior part of us, mind, that is an action of materials: without phosphor there would be no mind! The action of electricity upon certain materials, bound together by nerves, creates that sensibility of brain which we call consciousness."

His wound smarted; there seemed to be a heavy weight upon his head; his whole existence seemed a misery, whose acme was—now you must cease to exist!

A strange groan broke on his ear close by, it was that of a dying horse. It was but his body that suffered; he had known life as something good; and though he died in pain, his thoughts were not uneasy, he had no dread of annihilation. The brute was much happier than he, the man. The master of his own creation lay there, abandoned and tormented, like Orestes, by the furies of thought!

He thought of Esther, of Bodil, of his mother, and at that moment—with their remembrance fresh in his mind—he reflected on the religious belief of his childhood and on God. But this was only the weak wandering of his soul for a few minutes. He had learned from Feuerbach that the idea of a Supreme Being was but the creation of our own fancy; that to soar above such common-place notions, to despise the doctrine of hopes and fears beyond the grave, of that dream, eternally "to BE," was the highest point of cultivation. That he was able to stand alone, unsupported by any

invisible protector—that he was entirely a free agent, depending only on his own will, had been his impious thought in the midst of health and strength; was he, like a coward, to cast it off in the hour of feebleness? Was the knowledge he had acquired by years of close study and deep reflection to be discarded in a moment of mental weakness arising from bodily pain? No—even the sufferings of his present condition might be conquered by *his will*, his will should arrest the whirlwind of his thoughts—should banish from them the images of his friends, his sister, his parents! He should be all sufficient to himself by help of his will, although he lay, exhausted on the earth of this globe, which revolved in space many times faster than the sun, faster than sound can travel.

He gave himself up to nothing's depths, smothering every bubble of thought that arose. "It is past—my being—my flight upwards—life! In a damp ditch—forgotten—no better than a drop of water oozing out of the mire! well! extinct! forgotten! To become grass and straw—and mud! that will be my existence—circulating thus for ever! for ever!

Suddenly something stirred close to him, a head approached his, two eyes were gazing upon him; it was his dog, Hvaps, that had sought and found him. The dog came to *him—the man*, who had cast off his race—his friends—his soul—his God—that creature, who held the lowest place among those he had loved—came to him, and brought him comfort!

Hvaps put his fore legs round his master's neck, and pressed him as if he had been a human being, embracing him, licked his face, gave a piteous howl, ran round him, and then hugged him again, as if he had wished to pull him up, and restore him to strength. The dog had come to him! was this only instinct? Was it only the functions of the brain, the motion of the nerves and the blood which had led to this act, or was it something higher; and was that animal, as he lay on the thresholds of life and annihilation, to announce *this* to him?

Like a ray of light happiness streamed through his mind; with an effort he raised himself up, and looked earnestly at the dog's dark, sensible eyes—the movement caused the blood to flow afresh from the unbound wound, and it gushed forth in a warm stream.

Niels Bryde sank back fainting; but his last thought was, "Happy is he who in death clings fast to the belief of his childhood! I have it not! I know!—I know!"

"Es blies ein Jäger wohl in sein Horn,  
Und Alles was er blies, das war verlorn!"

He lay still, quite insensible: his dog sat whining by his head, and the clear moon shone over the battlefield; that great page, with death's hieroglyphics, in whose mysterious characters was concealed the key to the answer of that question—

"To be, or not to be?"

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE TIME OF WAR—LITTLE KAREN.

THERE was sorrow and anxiety at the Manse on the heath, as well as over the whole country. From the period of the commencement of the war, as if borne on the wings of the stormy wind, day and night the most alarming reports had flown throughout Jutland; the battle at Sleswig had been heard of; it was known that the main body of the Danish troops had retired to Als, and that the peninsula lay quite exposed to the advancing forces of the enemy. It was rumoured that the prisoners at the fortress of Rendsborg had been let loose, and were making their way into Jutland, ravaging everything with fire and sword.

Messenger followed messenger—the horses they rode were covered with foam, the corners of their mouths bloody; the false report was circulated that several towns were in flames. Then came the news that every one was to take up arms, even the women; the bridges must be destroyed, for the enemy were coming. Fugitives from the south corroborated the

report that the hostile troops were advancing. A fearful panic had seized on most people, though old Japetus took comfort from the Bible, wherein the Psalmist says,—

“He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.”\*

Bodil's thoughts were with her adopted brother, Niels Bryde, who had not written to them for so long, long a time. She knew that he had gone to the war, but whereabouts he was she had no means of ascertaining. She often thought of those who might be taken prisoners. Tears often stood in her eyes, and her mother wept, and the servant-girl wept; but with the two last-named their grief was principally caused by their fear of the misfortunes that might happen to themselves. Ballads were sung, and stories were told about what had taken place in the country two hundred years before, when the Swedes had invaded it, and our Polish allies, with the Kalmuks and Turks among them, did almost as much mischief as the enemy. How, in those former days, the pulpits and benches in the churches had been burned, and the clergymen hanged in their surplices on the trees, or cudgelled to death. But even from the old historical ballads of that bygone time Bodil derived comfort; she remembered the oft-told tale of an anxious

\* Psalm xli. 9.



little circle, who also inhabited a solitary manse, where it was expected, till night, that the enemy would make their appearance, but as the soothing words said,—

“God can defences round us raise!”

Trusting to Him, they retired to rest. No sound disturbed them; they slept on till nearly daylight, and thought that it never would come, yet when it did come, it revealed to their view a town destroyed by fire! Drifts of snow had concealed the clergyman's abode from the invading and devastating foe. God had raised a defence around them, as the words of the song said He could do.

General Wrangel had levied a contribution of five millions on the Jutlanders. They could not raise it; and if they could escape for less, God must “defences round us raise.” The unfortunate people thought, and planned; but man's wisdom is poor in comparison with God's.

Late in the evening the almost incredible intelligence was received that the enemy was moving southwards; that the Prussians were, by an unexpected order, about to evacuate Jutland; a succeeding messenger corroborated this news. What shouts of joyfulness and gratitude. “The Almighty watches over us! It is His doing—to Him be thanks!” Such was the general feeling. Every one's eyes sparkled with joy; the girls sang and danced in their youthful glee—all but one—little Karen, who was so

sedate; she, the youngest of them all, looked as she usually did, sad and gloomy.

"You should rejoice also!" said Bodil to her; "the enemy has left our country. What seems so dark in one hour, God can turn into light the next."

"It is happy for those who believe so!" replied the girl, mournfully.

Bodil looked with mild yet earnest inquiry into her eyes, and taking her hand, said,—

"There is something that weighs upon your mind! Have you a friend away, yonder?"

"I have none!" said Karen.

"May I not know what causes your grief?"

"I have none," said the girl. "I was only reflecting."

Every one at the Manse was rejoiced, but sorrow was soon again to visit its inmates. A letter was received at the village of Funder. An aged couple resided there, whose son was out in the war, and attended the hospital vans. The musician Grethe had heard this letter read aloud, and had borrowed it to take to the Manse, for mention was made in it of Niels Bryde, who had also gone to the scene of war, who was a surgeon, and was a fine brave fellow. The letter told of the entry of the Danish forces into Sundevad; that there had been a battle; and that Niels Bryde had either fallen in it, or been taken prisoner. The letter was written the morning after the battle, and it was then ascertained that Niels Bryde had not returned

with the hospital vans. He had been seen in the thick of the fight, succouring the wounded ; the ambulance-waggons had removed many of the dying, and many covered with blood ; but it was impossible to know in the confusion who was saved and who not. On first hearing this bad news Bodil was quite disheartened, overcome ; nay, stunned ; but hope speedily came to her relief. " He may still live," she thought ; " even though taken a prisoner ! " How doubly dear seemed every remembrance to her of the old days when they were together ! Her heart was full, and tears ran down her cheeks. Little Karen stood by her, and her mind was not less burdened with some sad recollection—but she said nothing.

Such intelligence as the letter had given, in this period of anxiety and distress, ought to be communicated to the old people, Bodil thought. She had given up speaking of Niels ; it was a rule she had laid down for herself, as the slightest mention of his name always disturbed her father's tranquillity of mind, and caused her mother to shed tears. He was not absent from their thoughts, but obstinacy was opposed to obstinacy : he, the younger party, ought to make the first advance towards a renewal of their intimacy. Now, perhaps, he never might be able to do so : he was probably a prisoner, if not dead. She went to her parents with the melancholy news conveyed in the letter. Old Japetus started up in dismay ; for a moment he seemed deeply moved ; but he soon sat

down calmly again—appeared lost in reflection for few moments—and then only said, “May God be merciful to him!”

The uncertainty whether Niels was still among the number of the living, or what had become of him, quickly became known; the intelligence flew like wild-fire, and added to the prevailing gloom. It was long since the minister’s adopted son had been so much the topic of conversation: every one now spoke of him—his boldness, his abilities, his knowledge, his good sense, were all brought forward and commented upon, both in the household of the old people, and among all the neighbours—many a tear was shed for him.

“When one is dead, there is an end of one,” said Karen, who had adopted, in her solitary reflections, the same opinion as Niels Bryde had imbibed from his learning.

We left him lying in a state of exhaustion on the field of battle, and shall now state, in a few words, what occurred there, and how a light, as if from God, gleamed upon his mind.

On the evening of the battle we saw Niels Bryde busy among the wounded, and exerting himself to the utmost to relieve the sufferers: he had mounted on the inclosure wall for a moment, when a ball from the enemy struck him on the breast—took its way lengthways by the ribs, and came out at his back. The shot gave him such a terrible shock, that he fell into the ditch close by, amidst bramble-bushes, and under the

thickly-covered branches of the hazel-bushes. He had fainted from loss of blood. It was night, and all around was dark.

Neglected and forgotten he lay there ; it was then that Hvaps, his faithful dog, whose life he had once saved, came to his rescue. His howling and agitation towards the dawn of day had attracted the observation of some Danish soldiers, who concluded that some one, living or dead, must be lying in that spot. They went to it, found Niels, and had him conveyed to the hospital. He had been there more than a week confined to bed, and amidst the crowd of thoughts that rushed over his mind, there arose one sweet as an opening floweret, born amidst the want in his heart, yet it was cast from him, and almost nipped in the bud by contending feelings. He felt a strong desire to write a few words to his sister, at home yonder at the Manse. It was upwards of a year since she had received any letter from him ; but now, as he lay on the couch of suffering, she and many old remembrances came back upon his mind ; even in his dreams, she appeared to him, always with her gentle affectionate looks. Therefore, after a few days, he yielded to the promptings of his heart, and wrote her a few words—enough to let her know where he was, and how he was.

How much of sunshine can there not lie in a small piece of paper ! Bodil was to experience this ! The days of sorrow fled before light and joy at the quiet, solitary home upon the heath.

"A letter, a letter!" she almost shrieked—"it is in his own writing!" Her hands trembled as she broke the seal, and hastily glanced at the date and name of the place where it was written. Augustenborg stood there, and the date was but a few days old. She glanced rapidly through it, then read it again more leisurely, for the first perusal was like a groping for, a seizing of the lost and found. "Is it true—is it indeed true?" He was alive, was out of danger, and in the course of a few weeks he might be with her again!

This letter came like the dove's olive branch—the minister's wife wept and kissed Bodil, the father himself smiled, and nodded his head, but said nothing. Niels had been at the gates of death; but they had not opened for him, his time in this world was not cut short.

"He may now resume his early impressions, return to his early faith," was Bodil's next almost involuntary thought; gratefully did she thank the Almighty for the happiness granted to her on that day—for the mercy vouchsafed to her adopted brother, and for the friendly disposition he had evinced towards her, in thinking of her, and writing to her from his sick-bed. She was so happy, that she wished every one to rejoice with her. The musician Grethe had wept and grieved for Niels, she should hear the good news without delay.

Little Karen was at Grethe's when Bodil went there with the intelligence about Niels, and the letter with which she was so pleased.

"I felt certain that he still lived," said Grethe, "as I also feel assured that with my own eyes I shall see him here among us again, that kind young man, who was so good to an old woman like me ! Yon instrument serves me as a memento of him ; God knows what would have become of it, but for Herr Niels Bryde !—Yes ! he resembles the protecting spirit in Lykkens Tumleklode—would that he could also marry a king's daughter, or some lady with a fine property !" and she went on with a somewhat jumbled discourse touching Niels and her harmonica, the rumours that were afloat about the war, and the dangers to be dreaded.

Bodil promised to purchase for her a new harmonica on the first opportunity, as the old one was now almost worn out, with constant use. "I promise you this," she said, "in remembrance of this happy day."

The old woman was much affected by this kindness, it would be too expensive a gift, she said, and she did not think any new instrument could equal the old one, on which she had played for so many years. "Ay, even now, it can sound loudly enough at a feast or a dance, one would think there was magic in it ; but I know better."

She insisted on kissing Bodil's hand, and even little Karen looked pleased, though her features did not relax into a positive smile.

"How delightful it is to have a mind happy and free from anxiety!" exclaimed Bodil; and she spoke on her way home to Karen, who accompanied her, about God's grace towards us poor human beings. The girl suddenly burst into tears—grasped Bodil's arm, and sighed deeply,—

"God's grace! God's grace!" she cried; "I am as far from that as any human creature can be!" and with full confidence in her goodness she opened her heart to Bodil.

"I have a sin upon my soul," she said; "more than a police-court and its punishments would deal with, and yet I fancy at times, that I am not altogether guilty, but that what happened being without any evil design, God may grant me pardon—*grace* as you have said." She then went on,—*"I was little more than a child—but a lass, as they call it, when I first took service with the judge and his lady, who were then young people. Many strangers were there on a visit from Copenhagen, among them was a young man, who sketched extremely well, and took likenesses. He had the habit of leaving all his keeping places open; he would leave his watch and his rings on his dressing-table, whilst he was wandering about the neighbourhood. He could cut out figures so cleverly with the scissors that even the judge's young wife admired them and*



begged for them. Many of these lay upon his table, and one day, when the door was standing half open, I espied them, and entered the room only to look at the finished and half-finished figures. Many other things lay upon the table, and amongst these was a beautiful ring ! I felt a strong desire to try it on, but it was too large for any finger except my thumb—and on it, the ring stuck fast. The gentleman came in at that moment, and I moved away, and told a lie, for I said—your paper figures had been blown down on the floor ! He looked at me with such a strange, tender expression in his eyes, that I felt as if he were about to make love to me, perhaps I did him injustice in so thinking, but I was frightened and run out of the room with the ring still on my thumb. Down-stairs I heard that money had been lost in the house—they talked of thieves—and the doings of the thieves ; I became alarmed, for I knew that I was in possession of what belonged to another. I waited in the utmost anxiety for the moment to arrive when the gentleman should leave his chamber. At last I thought he had gone into the drawing-room, and I ran up-stairs to put back the ring. He had not gone down, however, and he was upon the stairs a little above me. But half-way up, there was a small room, where the poor tailor, who was working at our house, had his night-quarters. The door was ajar, and I rushed in there. The room was so small that it held scarcely anything but a bed and his chest of clothes. I scarcely knew what I was doing, I was so frightened,

for the gentleman from Copenhagen and my own conscience accused me so much, though I had only put the ring on my finger to look at it. A pair of socks lay on the floor, I was obliged to pretend to have something to do in there, for the gentleman followed me in, so I took up the socks, thrust my hand into one of them and began to arrange it for folding it up, whilst the visitor from Copenhagen began to speak to me in the most gallant and complimentary manner. I trembled from top to toe, but I could see that he only laughed at my terror. The lady came up-stairs at that moment, and observing me, she asked what I was doing there ; I replied that I had been putting the room to rights, and went down-stairs immediately ; but during this time the ring had come off my thumb, and had fallen into the foot of the tailor's stocking. I was sitting in the nursery with the child, when the search for the money that had been lost began. It was not to be found—but in a stocking belonging to the tailor—he had himself shortly after I left his room gone in there, and laid the socks in his box—the ring was found. The tailor was accused of theft—indeed, convicted of it—and I—I, the guilty one, I was so dreadfully frightened, that I did not dare to tell how it had all happened. I was a child, a wicked, unfortunate child ! The poor tailor lost his wits in consequence of this affair, and became a lunatic ; and I—I have never until now, I know not why I do it now, dared to confess my guilt and misery !”

Thus, but too late, was the enigma solved ; the aberration of mind which it had produced in the unfortunate tailor, however, could not be removed with the explanation and removal of the cause.

"I dare not assume to be your judge," said Bodil, "but God is merciful ; He weighs our sincere sorrow and contrition in the balance for us." She became silent. The lively joy she had so recently felt, on receiving the letter from her adopted brother, was much damped by little Karen's sorrow and confession. She hardly knew how to comfort her. They had stopped for a minute or two on the road. Karen sat down, overcome by her feelings.

"Would that my head lay on the block !" she half sobbed ; "then I should pay the penalty of my crime ! Oh ! doomsday is not the end of all—no ! for me, all days and nights are judgment days, when my sin takes the upper place in my thoughts."

Bodil took her hand, and repeated the psalmist's words :—

"He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." \*

It was still and lonely on the heath, but not more still and lonely than the two hearts there.

And a messenger of peace, in the shape of a letter, found its way from the heath to the palace of Augus-

\* Psalm ciii. 10, 11.

tenborg, which was also a battle-place ; battles between life and death, though Niels Bryde quitted it well and happy, and the first campaign was soon at an end. A suspension of hostilities was declared, and the Danish troops were sent to their winter-quarters, mostly in Jutland. But Niels Bryde did not come thither, as Bodil had hoped he might have done ; she thought, then, that probably at the happy Christmas time he might be with them, when surely every asperity would be smoothed down. But even that did not happen, for he was obliged to remain at Als. Another white dove in the form of a letter was sent, whilst the snow drifted, the white bees (snow flakes) swarmed, as people said, and girls and boys sat and knitted woollen stockings, while the scholars among them read aloud old newspapers about the war, and the songs, "The gallant volunteer," "The lads on board," and "The Easter chimes." The thoughts of a whole people were expressed in these songs. Little Karen sat, looking less melancholy, and yet with a sad smile, listening to them. Her sin pressed less heavily on her mind since she had confessed it, the old clergyman, the judge himself, had been told of it ; words of grave reproof had been said to her, but also words of comfort and pardon. The musician Grethe had by this time a new harmonica, which Bodil, as she promised, had ordered for her, and which had been sent from Copenhagen by way of Aarhus, and Grethe soon learned all the new patriotic songs. At first she found the instru-

ment rather difficult to play on, and had to try it often at home, but she speedily became accustomed to it, and at the Manse was heard—

“O, were all danger past, I should be here with thee!”

When would all danger be past? What would the new year bring forth?

On the 3rd of April, 1849, the truce ended, and rumours of evil came with the birds and the breezes of spring:—

“The lark comes flying from the South,  
It brings so strange a tale——

The lapwing comes with ruffled plumes,  
And with its sorrowing mate——

The stork comes swiftly as he can,  
With blood his wings are red,  
Could I but tell what I have heard,  
Ye would not sit here as if dead.  
Up, peasants, up, and make bold stand!  
The foe sets foot on your native land,  
Away, away! Thus cries the stork.”\*

In Eckernförde was harpooned, like a whale imprisoned amidst shoals of sand, a Danish ship of the line. Many Danish sailors then went Hvilfeldt's way to heaven. There was an encampment on Dyppebjerg, and the unprotected Kolding was soon in flames; while,

\* This patriotic song is, we believe, by Henriette Nielsen, the talented authoress of a Vaudeville, called “Sløgtningene,” and a charming tale about the war, “Dorthe.”

under showers of bullets, the wounded and the mutilated lay around. Rumours and true tidings of these sad events soon reached the heath, which had once been so still and lonesome, but was no longer that. The days of solitude and silence were gone, there was a restlessness, an anxious dread among all ; news upon news arrived, it was said that the imperial army was entering Jutland, and General Rye retreating.

In the towns and in the country, even here amidst the woods and wild heaths, every one occupied themselves in hiding their most valuable effects. At the Manse all the plate was gathered together, even to the well-known silver egg-shaped vinaigrette, and, on the outside of the garden, under a dwarf willow, a large hole had been dug by Bodil and little Karen, where it was to be deposited. The enemy's troops had already been seen in Silkeborg wood. Fugitives passing the Manse, gave tidings of them. The Bavarians had entered Silkeborg.

Von der Tann sat eating his breakfast in the manufacturer Drewsen's new house, near Lake Lange, and all the way up to Aarhus had the enemy penetrated. One heard of all, and more than all, that had happened, as if the very air brought news, as if the birds carried it, and it was repeated in the falling drops of rain. The time, and every one's thoughts, were full of the horrors of war ; the earth itself seemed to tremble beneath the rattling of the artillery, whilst the air was darkened with the cannon's smoke. No more letters were re-

ceived—where could Niels Bryde be ? How fared it with the Danes ?

“ God can command success ! ”

Niels Bryde was in Jutland itself, in the besieged Fredericia ; this was not known at the Manse, where nothing had lately been heard of him. All their thoughts were centred in the war, they spoke of nothing else, even in church it formed a subject of prayer. These were days in which every heart turned towards God, in whose mercy alone there was hope of safety and deliverance.

In the outward world—the great world of nature—all went on in its accustomed prosperous manner. The hardy broom was in blossom, and the busy bees were humming around it ; shoals of young fish sported in the eel-ponds, and the wild ducks dreaded neither sportsmen nor guns. It was only on the mind of man that heavy thoughts were pressing—only to them, that these were days of trial. But even they had blessings to be thankful for, said the old clergyman, as he described how the spirit of Holger Danske was awakened amongst the whole nation, how every little selfish individual feeling was cast aside, that but one thought animated the entire people—unanimity in love for their fatherland ! Follies and frivolities were thrown off—great sacrifices were made—brilliant actions abounded—and even, in the midst of the warfare and agitation of the times, God would ordain all things for the best.

Bodil's thoughts were devoted to her dear brother, wherever he might be ; she trusted that religious feelings might revive in his mind during these hours of adversity ; that, on the battle-field and in the hospital, where he must have witnessed the departure, in consciousness, of many a spirit, and in the succeeding solemn hours of reflection, he would become convinced of the immortality of the soul, and salvation through Jesus Christ. The folly of youth, the presumptuous tampering with holy things, would pass away, and her brother, in these sorrowful days, through the grace of God, might be renewed in heart.

Fredericia had sustained a long siege, single houses, nay, whole streets, had been destroyed by fire, many of the population were mutilated—many killed. It was now that the song was heard everywhere :—

“ Over the Isles an angel flies,  
Of Danish valour, hark ! he sings,  
’T is victory, with eagle eyes,  
But blood is dripping from his wings.”\*

A letter at length arrived from Niels, but it was not to Bodil, it was to her father ; and she was delighted at this, for it was his first advance towards a reconciliation with the old clergyman. In a few words it told of the dearly-bought but glorious victory ; but General Rye had fallen ; valiant men had shed their blood and given their lives to maintain Denmark's rights, and place it in its just position.

\* B. S. Ingemann.



Tidings soon after reached the Manse that negotiations for peace were going on ; then, perhaps, Niels Bryde would come to them, if only for a few days. There was a cessation of hostilities, but he did not come ; and his winter-quarters were subsequently in Funen. We shall not follow him thither, nor even during the third season of the operations of war ; we shall remain at the heath with Bodil, and with her hear of the coming of the Swedes, the opposition in Sleswig against the advance of the enemy, their retreat, and of the Danish troops' bivouac-life near Flensburg. Herr Skjöldt, of Silkeborg, brought accounts of this ; he, like many Danes, had paid a visit to the army ; he had seen Niels Bryde, and had dined with him in the pleasant camp, as he called it. An entire town, with streets named after those in Copenhagen, had been built, composed of clay huts, adorned with the green branches of trees ; the national flag of Denmark waved there. It was charming summér weather ; clear light nights ; and songs, in well-practised voices, were heard from the tents. War looked quite attractive there, Herr Skjöldt said ; and his descriptions pleased the old people, and lightened the weight on Bodil's mind. This summer picture was very different from the one she had painted to herself of war ; she now beheld, in fancy, the Danish soldier waving his fresh beech-tree bough—a second “ Birnam Wood ” advancing steadily forward ; she felt what soon after the minstrel sang :—

“From Als till Dannevirke,  
From Sli to Æger’s door;  
Shall Denmark’s lions spring  
Unconquered as of yore!” \*

The battle of Idsted was won, Frederickstad, like a blazing bonfire, illuminated the victory of the Danes; the church-bells pealed for the return of peace, and the whole country rang with—

“His promise has he kept—the gallant volunteer,  
Hurra !”

He alone was, for the moment, the idol of the people—triumphal arches were raised—and many a poor soldier found himself a great man—who had never thought anything of himself before.

After three trying years Niels Bryde returned to Copenhagen—what he had gone through in these three years of strict devotion to his duties had sobered and improved him; they had been, as it were, a spiritual school to him—and whither had they led him ?

Let us follow him, as Bodil’s thoughts followed him through the three long years during which the broom and the ling had bloomed in all their freshness and beauty, and the birds had carolled merrily in the woods—during which only human beings were anxious and depressed, and yet, who, like Antæus, every time they were cast down to the ground, raised them-

\* Grundtvig.

selves with renewed strength, and renewed trust—in God.

In the little village church the old clergyman returned thanks to God for the victory and the peace ; in her little chamber, Bodil again thanked her Lord and Saviour that He had listened to her humble petitions. She prayed for all who had been bereaved of those they loved, she prayed for all who still lay on the bed of suffering ; she meditated upon God's infinite mercy, and the blessings of peace ; she thought of Niels Bryde ; she hoped that he had cast aside the errors she had so deplored, those errors into which he had surely fallen only in consequence of youthful folly—those she trusted were combated—and dismissed ! she wept in her joy, and smiled in her tears : and we will, along with her thoughts, seek him in Copenhagen, in a new position of life.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE SOLDIER'S RETURN—RELIGIOUS FAITH AND SCIENCE.

NEVER had the soldiery been more heartily welcomed, provided with better quarters, or better cared for, than on their entry this time into Copenhagen. They occupied every one's thoughts; there were again heroes in every-day life. It was not the mere fashion of the moment, not mere copying of each other, or got-up ruptures, not the currents, with which the inhabitants of Copenhagen, under other circumstances, had sometimes allowed themselves to be carried away; it was a sincere, natural, deep feeling. The Danes had elevated their name in the eyes of the world, and had shown of what they were capable; every one entered into the general satisfaction, and for a time each forgot *himself*.

Several householders resolved on getting up in haste a fête for those who were quartered on them; the good hostesses and their daughters were present at it, and a gay ball was forthwith given. Everything, even in the most quiet and gloomy abodes, seemed to assume a holiday air.

"A joyous shout, the land throughout  
Was heard, and every heart rejoiced!"\*

Niels Bryde was invited by the Arons' family to stay with them for some time; the two rooms which had belonged to Julius, and where his furniture and books still remained, where his paintings and engravings hung, and everything was exactly as he had left them, three years before, when he went away, were now offered to his friend, and he was received as a near relative might have been. The father and the grandfather embraced and welcomed him; the two elder daughters wept and laughed; Rebecca was particularly eloquent, while Amalie had her future bridegroom, a Swedish officer, to introduce to him. Esther's eyes beamed with joy, and yet around her mouth there was a sad smile, an expression of sorrow, which Niels Bryde understood full well. The mother uttered but a few words, and these were, "Our Julius had to remain over yonder!"

"He is with us, too!" exclaimed Esther, earnestly. "He is with us in our joy, with us on this happy day when the long lost have returned to us!"

How lovely she had become! such an intelligent countenance; and to that were added every beauty of feature and person. Few of the splendid poetical descriptions of Persian or Arabian beauty had had a model such as Esther!

Herr Svane also made his appearance, and greeted

\* H. B. Holst.

Niels with a joyous countenance, and joyous spirits, notwithstanding, what he took little pains to conceal, that the last few years had robbed his head of all the remaining dark hair, and also of a good deal of the gray.

"One becomes old," said he; "one must put on a stomach belt; but the earth also wears one, it has its warm gulf-stream from Mexico up to us here in the north. What should we be without that belt? I find mine, however, not at all useful every day. But welcome, my friend!"

Madam Jensen also paid him a visit, it was a great effort of friendship to call upon an unmarried man, she let him know, but she had heard that Dr. Bryde, who had never been absent from her thoughts, had returned. She was in excellent spirits, and confessed to going sometimes to the theatre now.

From Madam Jensen he heard about Mother Börre, she of the round tower, whom he had known as a child. She was still living, and had lately had a piece of good luck, for the surgeon to whom she had sold her corpse was dead. His widow had no desire to possess it, so that Mother Börre was again free; on account of her great age she was permitted to retain her little annuity, and that is all we have to say about her.

The chamberlain and his lady met Herr Bryde on the ramparts. The chamberlain spoke of his fear that the Scandinavian union might now be too much in vogue, and the lady was very angry at the minister

of war, because dogs were not allowed to go on the ramparts ; Zemire could not therefore accompany her.

“ Charming weather ! ” said the lady—“ quite Venetian ;—nice arrangement in the riding-house !—lovely girl that little Arons !—a Jewess—well dressed !—a good fortune—silence ! Oh that little rogue Cupid !—*Au revoir !* ”

This was what passed on the ramparts.

In Niels Bryde’s first conversation alone with Esther she spoke of her brother, asked about every little circumstance, every particular that had been mentioned in the letters. She said that at first it had grieved her much that he had died in the hospital of typhus fever, instead of falling on the field of battle ; but she soon perceived, that those who, from over fatigue, and exposure to the cold of night on the damp ground, were carried off by illness—had also fallen in the performance of their duty, and had given their lives to their native country. Niels Bryde had to describe to her his last hours, and to relate to her all that had passed that last night at Augustenborg. He repeated her brother’s words, and Esther perceived how much Niels himself must have suffered. The sun of science, she thought, had blinded him to that whence science itself arose. He had not been able to declare his conviction of the immortality of the soul.

“ Then you do not believe in a life after this one ? ” she said, as she looked sadly at him, yet with her winning smile. She perceived in that short moment, that

a world of thought, the soul's glimpses during three years of trial and suffering, were rushing through his mind.

As, even among the lowest tribes of mankind, even among the wildest savages of the woods, there exists, however darkly and undefined, an idea of a God, so there is with the most subtle materialist, a something—a limit where thought wavers, and perceives a scintillation of the spirit of God. In space the elements are what religious belief should be in the soul. Science had, in hours of deep thought, demonstrated to him, with mathematical precision, that in everything there exists a power, which unchangeable in itself, makes everything else change: that power which from the lifeless produces motion, life, and thought: for that transcendental power he knew now but one name—and that was—God. He had arrived at this conviction through science; but immortality for us human creatures—eternity of consciousness and being—that could only be conceived through faith—and faith he had cast away!

How much happier and more fortunate it is to *believe*, than to *know*; for faith embraces all—and knowledge is so poor! The thread of thought from that night on the battle-field, however, was not quite lost, though it fluttered somewhat loosely. Bodil would have said, the hand of God can even now bind it fast, and bestow on it the strength of an anchor's



cable. "*To be, or not to be!*"—that great question which concerns eternity—came and vanished like a vivid flash of lightning, that leaves all darker around.

How often had he not, by the couch of death, asked himself, "what is that which in the wandering glance of the dying creates a sensation in my nerves of sight, which again cause the nerves of feeling in my heart to quiver, and the conviction comes over me, his death is blessed, for the expression of that last look declares his belief in an everlasting life?" He had tried, by the test of reason, these involuntary feelings, which, for the first time, awoke in his mind when his faithful dog, on the field of battle, had laid his head close to his face, and looked at him with so speaking, so affectionate an expression of eye, as if he also had a soul. Immortality! what grandeur, what magnitude in that thought! Whence arises a longing for it in the breasts of man? Every desire for improvement, every want in creation, would there be satisfied! Immortality—is it but a phantasy that never shall become a certainty?

These thoughts—these doubts in his soul, which it has taken us many words to shadow forth, passed through his mind at the moment that Esther, in a tone of deep sorrow, had exclaimed,—

"Then you do not believe in a life after this one?"

"Convince me of this, Esther," he said; "convince me of it, if you can."

She looked at him earnestly.

"I am a stranger to the way in which your conviction will be brought about," she said, and then became silent ; for a long time she did not utter a word : suddenly her eye fell upon a withered rose-bush that was in a flower-pot in the window, every leaf had fallen off, every twig was dried up and without life, the very root was decayed.

"Do you see that plant?" she said, "it is extinct, as we would say—is there not much instruction in these words applied to the plant and to mankind when dead? He whose religion is derived from science admits its import, and he whose religion is derived from the revelations of the Bible fully admits it also. It is extinct, say the learned, its component parts have each returned to its original source ; hydrogen, oxygen, and all that the many elements are called, of which things are constituted, have retired, gone from this object of creation, out into the great universe, to work on still for ever, though not in the same, yet in similar unconscious manifestations. Amidst the animals there is something better, something higher than in the construction and powers of plants, and in mankind we all know there is something higher still ; there are conscience, justice, in short all the spiritual qualities, for which we borrow names, and which in their highest development lead human nature towards God. Our earthly part goes out into the great revolving circle, and our spirit returns to its much higher origin !

Here science and the Bible meet—the spirit goes to God—to its destination—eternal life !”

“And has remembrance and consciousness ?” asked Niels Bryde. “When the phosphor of the brain subsides into a kind of gas, where then is our immortality ? Nowhere !”

“The Bible gives us assurance of it,” said Esther.

“Not the Old Testament,” said Niels ; “the history of Job is a thorn-bush, that drags tufts of wool out of the sheep of faith. Job says,—‘My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away : so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more !’”

“The Old Testament,” said Esther, “is a collection of books by human beings, the New Testament, as a Christian you ought to know, is a revelation from God, and it promises us everlasting life. But you scarcely believe in the Bible. In what concerns the soul, surely one ought to be guided most by that which contains matters of greatest spiritual importance. Here, however, is another book,” she added with a peculiar smile, as she turned over the leaves, until she found the passage she was looking for ; “here stands what I think, but which I cannot express so briefly or so clearly myself.” It was Goethe’s “Faust,” that poem which had always so particularly interested her, because she had once discovered a similitude between Faust and Niels Bryde ; it was the second volume she showed him.

He read :—

“Daran erkenn’ ich den gelehrten Herrn !  
Was ihr nicht tastet, steht euch meilenfern ;  
Was ihr nicht faszt, das fehlt euch ganz und gar ;  
Was ihr nicht rechnet, glaubt ihr sey nicht wahr ;  
Was ihr nicht wägt, hat für euch kein Gewicht ;  
Was ihr nicht münzt, das, meint ihr, gelte nicht.”

“You then also,” exclaimed Niels, “place faith and science in opposition to each other; divide them—faith in the oratory—science in the laboratory?”

“No,” said Esther; “I consider that truth cannot fight against truth; but I place more confidence in the wisdom of God than in the wisdom of man. Man’s wisdom often deludes, confuses, leads astray the poor in mind. I could say, in the words of the Bible, ‘Better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea, than offend one of those little ones.’”

“You allude particularly to materialists,” said Niels Bryde. “You look upon them as ungodly, indeed, partly as wicked necromancers. Abstain for a moment from attributing evil motives to them. Enter for a moment their ranks, see with their eyes. It is an inspiration with us to inquire into, know, and understand ourselves and the world; an inspiration which leads men to science; he divides, clears up, and allots to the world what absolutely belongs to it. Can we deny our positive convictions? When Galileo was

[illegible]

...of the ... They seem to ...  
... in their belief, and ...  
... make the least inquiry ...  
... of religious belief is truth, and ...

Esther. "Then the various religious creeds would be true; there are errors in faith as in knowledge."

"Certainly," said Niels Bryde; "and astrology fell to the ground because it was not based on truth."

"I am not afraid, nor do I think any one need be, to inquire into truth," said Esther. "Why should it not be allowable to human beings, in regard to those things which are of the most importance to themselves, to scrutinize and to test? Such cannot be offensive to the Almighty, for He reveals, and we learn! But as there are limits to the extent of the sight of corporeal things, so our spiritual eyes cannot penetrate beyond a certain boundary. This is no reason why we should not believe that there is much beyond our powers of vision; when we behold the wonderful things around us, we may surely admit that there exist still greater powers unknown to us; in the same way as we believe that there are globes in the milky way, and still more distant stars, the sight of which has never yet been attainable by human means. But," she said, interrupting herself, "I have entered upon a subject which might make it seem as if I wished to pass for a learned lady. I am not that, and I should never aspire to be one. At least, I should only like to have that learning which could teach me where to find the healing herbs that might, if applied to your eyes, open them to the truth of everlasting life."

"I have sought to find these myself," he said, "but have always failed. I would willingly receive instruc-

This image shows a blank white page. There are some very faint, thin horizontal black lines near the top and bottom edges, which appear to be scanning artifacts or dust marks. The rest of the page is completely empty and white.

an Gott ?” The book was lying on the table, Niels Bryde took it up, but without opening it, for the words were engraven on his mind—he recited

“ Wer darf sagen,  
Ich glaub’ an Gott ! ”

And on Gretchen’s exclamation—“ So glaubst Du nicht,” Faust continues :—

“ Wer darf ihn nennen ?  
Und wer bekennen :  
Ich glaub’ ihn ?  
Wer empfinden  
Und sich unterwinden  
Zu sagen : ich glaub’ ihn nicht ?  
Der Allumfasser,  
Der Allerhalter,  
Faszt und erhält er nicht  
Dich, mich, sich selbst ? ”

“ As Gretchen and Faust viewed God in different lights, so, perhaps, do we ; but we meet nevertheless more in our views than the poet, in the first portion of his poem, has allowed them to meet. Belief in God is something undefinable, we have no expression for what is inconceivable—beyond the reach even of the imagination. We are certain of His existence. But of immortality with consciousness and recollection—though we may feel an impulse towards the belief in it—a hope of it—we have no actual proof.”

“ In the love of God—in the justice of God it stands visible to all,” said Esther. “ Do we not read,



‘Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead?’

“Are not the very tips of our fingers objects of God’s care? Is not everything arranged for us by the hand of love? All that is created fulfils its destiny—the desire that has come with it into existence. Shall man, the highest object of creation, not obtain that for which his soul thirsts—immortality? God’s mercy, God’s justice, assures us of it. We all, even in the happiest circumstances of life, have to undergo sufferings; look at the unequal distribution of good and evil, of punishment and rewards in this world! How often mankind appears as if he were but a toy. You have told me of the musician Grethe, upon the heath—how her abilities were thrown away there; you have told me of the poor tailor, who appeared to be the mere sport of circumstances, and how he suffered unjustly. The outcasts of human nature—a Caligula—those who committed every crime—those whom history tells us tyrannized over millions of their fellow-creatures, seemed to have been permitted by that God whom we all know is good, wise, and merciful. Does not all this prove that there is another—an everlasting life? To me it seems as clear as that two and two make four.”

“Well, I must compliment you on your arguments,” said Niels Bryde. “Your words carry much weight, or else it is the music in them which wins me; yet I have not attained to faith—I cannot understand it.”

“No,” said Esther, “faith is not the result of thought—it is a gift! It is given in the New Testament. There flows the fountain of life! I dare not call myself a Christian, for I have not been baptized as a Christian, and, without that, I am still the Jewish girl; but, may the light, the grace God has permitted to shine on me, also shine on you! And it will—it will!”

She took his hand, and looked at him with a mingled expression of joy and sorrow, whilst her peculiarly eloquent smile played around her beautiful mouth.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

MORE ABOUT ESTHER AND AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE. SELF-EXAMINATION.

NIELS BRYDE was well received in many families, "and that is very satisfactory," said Herr Svane. "In some houses everybody is taken up with the children, who are all clever, of course; in other places nothing is thought of but household affairs, and household accounts. Niels takes the twaddle very well."

The Arons' house had become almost his home. They were all partial to him there, even Rebecca, the head of the family, who was a little obstinate in her opinions, and was always opposed to him when Herr Brusz and the painter were in question—the genius of Herr Meibum's *soirée*. Herr Brusz had become more rabidly Northern than ever—preached Edda-Christianity, and pronounced the sentence of everlasting death on all who did not adopt his creed. The painter was always in ecstasies at the compositions of some of his brother artists—Niels Bryde found all this extremely tiresome; he ventured to say so one day, and was

told in reply by Rebecca "All the arts are tiresome to those who, like Niels Bryde, had no sympathy in them."

Similar little altercations were of frequent occurrence with Rebecca, Herr Brusz, and the genius. On many other subjects besides that of religion, Esther entertained a different opinion from that of Niels Bryde, but he felt it always a loss, nevertheless, if he had not had some conversation with her every day.

The works of Kierkegaard, that dripstone-cistern of humour and good sense, whose tendency, according to Herr Svane's judgments, is to form orthodox, gothic church arches, many Danish ladies say they understand, Esther could not take any pleasure in reading it. She admired its talent, but was tired of travelling through so many words to the temple of thought.

Her sisters declared that Esther did not understand music, they went constantly to the Italian Opera—patronized it only, and had a lock of Rossi's hair. Esther said that Rossini's compositions were like champagne, and that she preferred a very different draught, one from that fresh natural fountain which flows in the music of Gluck, Beethoven, and Mozart ; she liked Hartmann and Gade, their music reached her heart—of course, therefore, she did not understand music, according to her sisters.

Esther went to the Exhibition, but her taste was somewhat peculiar, she did not admire what her sisters did, and therefore her opinions were not listened to.

Her passion was sculpture—such as was produced by that heaven-born artist Thorwaldsen.

She admired Æhlenschläger exceedingly, she perceived and spoke of the interest he evinced for all that was Northern, and how he wished to bring the literature of the north to the knowledge of other countries ; but she observed defects also. She thought that his northern females were too soft—Thora, Signe, Valborg—they were gentle, patient, pure-minded Christian women, they charmed us in description, as ideal persons ; but she thought they could not have been such in reality. History and the ancient Scandinavian ballads showed them to have been very different, and they should have been represented according to their true, historical delineations. Eleonore Ulfeld, in the drama of “Dina,” she considered a failure. She thought that a pattern for all woman-kind, as Eleonore Ulfeld is called in history and school-books, should not have been made to appear merely as a soft, pliant, graceful creature ; it was on account of her affection for her husband, and the courage with which, for his sake, she encountered all the reverses and trials of life, that she became a pattern woman. She had determination—passions—character ; Esther did not recognise the historical Eleonore in the poet’s phantom.

Had Esther spoken in this manner in society, she would have had to do battle with all Copenhagen, “the Northern Athens ;” happily, she expressed her ideas to Niels Bryde ; and the very fact that she never

allowed her judgment to be swayed by popular opinion—though when she differed from *him* she did not show Rebecca's doggedness—attracted him more and more. She became to him an object in life, which he could not do without, and he was therefore as much as possible with her family.

One day, as he came in, Esther was reading Kerner's "*Die Seherin von Prevorst*;" he called the work a hysterical, overstrained, unwholesome production, and, with a grimace of disgust, snatched it from her.

"Have you read it?" asked Esther; "at least, otherwise than many critics read books, the general meaning of which they fancy they have got at, because they have glanced at a few paragraphs and turned over a few pages? I am not charmed with this book; but still there is something that interests me in it. You do not believe in the supernatural; you scarcely believe in the highest truths. You aim at bringing all that is spiritual within the limits of reason, and that is a vain endeavour. Although that there is in each of us a soul, an unseen spirit, you *must* know, for your soul is yourself. But have you never thought that this soul has, as it were, wires of feeling, that at moments can raise it above our common world of sense? We have presentiments sometimes, which all our wisdom could not have imparted to us. And is not prayer, when it comes from an agitated heart, such a power? There was a time

when scientific research had not discovered the paths of the comets ; their movement was called accidental, for they did not come within any of the laws with which science was acquainted in relation to the universe. Latterly it has been ascertained that they have their own destined, individual courses. May not the spirit-world, like the comets, have its natural transfiguration, though we have not yet attained a knowledge of it? In the great miracle which the whole is, why should I not believe in a higher world of spirit, with its own laws and paths, quite beyond the merely material? How shall I express my meaning? When in the great mechanism of the heavens the comets avoid the moon's, the earth's, and the stars' appointed courses, may there not be, in what we call the supernatural, paths that avoid the ordinary? We creep like worms up around a mighty building, and allow ourselves to fancy that the worm sees before him every stone he is creeping over, nay, even knows its chemical composition, though he is not able to see at once a whole wing of the building, much less the entire structure: is it not thus with us? Doubt not the existence of the miraculous!"

"Where, then, will be the boundary of the spirit-world? We shall be involved in ghost-craft and imposture; it will go so far that even wearing apparel will be pressed into the service, for spectres always present themselves in the well-known habiliments of the defunct!"

“‘There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy,’ says Shakespeare in his Hamlet, and these are applicable words. Science knows so little; and where it stops, faith commences.”

“Or superstition!” said Niels Bryde; “and that is what ought to be rooted out of the fields of faith!”

“But are you in that matter enough of a botanist to be able to distinguish the herbs from each other? I had hoped, after our late conversation, that we had become more alike in opinions; but you are a great way still from a belief in immortality.”

“Well,” said Niels Bryde, jestingly, “I make you this promise, Esther, that if I die before you, and there be an eternal existence, an entrance into another life, I shall manifest myself to you. But do not be afraid; I shall come to you as a sound—a tone, and not show myself in my usual spectre burnoose.”

“But what if I had not the spiritual organs that would enable me to hear this revelation,” said Esther, seriously. “You have not now the thought-organ for such, and therefore I think it likely that your path after death may be in a very different direction to anything touching the realities of this world. A sound—a tone!” she continued earnestly. “Yes; thus shall I, too, prefer to manifest myself to those I love.”

There was something morbid about Esther, Niels Bryde thought; in such conversations this appeared, but when she spoke of the arts, of poetry, of the refined



and beautiful, all was truth and good sense, for on these subjects he sympathized and coincided with her.

They saw each other, as has been said, almost every day; but at the beginning of summer Niels left Copenhagen for a couple of weeks to pay a visit in the country; and, during that time, an event took place in the Arons family, of much importance to them all, but more especially to Esther.

The young Count Spuhl—he may be remembered, perhaps, as having been with Niels Bryde in his earliest visit to the round tower, after his return to Copenhagen—had often invited Niels to pay him a visit in Funen; the Count had served, though in a superior capacity, during the war, had been wounded, and had received surgical assistance from his friend.

The visit to Funen had no important bearing on the history of Niels Bryde, except, indeed, that during his stay at Odensee a circumstance occurred which caused him much pain. He happened to see here again a person whom we also cannot have quite forgotten—the poor tailor, so well known on the Jutland heath. He still lived and suffered; here, in the lunatic asylum, at Odensee, he was immured, *maintained* as it was called. What an existence! Better never to have been born! His life was, as it were, a punishment for crimes he had never committed. Niels Bryde, accompanied by the physician to the asylum, went to pay him a visit, and saw the poor invalid.

They joined him in "the garden," where the idiots and quiet harmless lunatics were permitted to assemble, and where he was also allowed to go, when his nerves were not too much agitated, for then he was put into a straight jacket ; the great crushing machine of the law, he said, went always, like a pump in the sky, over the wicked and the good ; he thought of nothing but the law. His thin, shadowy figure was, if possible, even thinner than formerly, all his vivacity was gone, his head was sunk on his breast ; they found him sitting on a bench, looking up at a tree ; he looked as if he were but a slight wooden frame, with clothes flung over it, and his boots were too large for him.

"I am melting away!" said the poor man ; "but I am the purest snow, and when I am all melted, every one will see that there is no ring to be found. I have not got it ! I never took it ! What a buzzing there is all around ! My brain is in flames !—Oh, Lord Jesus—thou art my treasure ! I am Peer the gold digger's grandson—I cannot escape ; the quicksand is closing over my head !—I shall be buried—buried—never found ! But I have not got the ring !"

The ring was always the burden of the poor madman's song. Niels Bryde spoke to him, mentioned Japetus Mollerup, the musician Grethe, and Silkeborg ; the lunatic gazed at him, but did not understand him. A criminal is not so miserable in his solitary cell, as was this unfortunate, innocent man in the darkness of his spirit. Why ? Niels Bryde would once have

explained that the disease lay in his nerves, in the circulation of his blood, in the whole of the arrangement of the machine. Now, that answer did not fully satisfy him. The visit to this unhappy person became a dark spot in the remembrance of these otherwise sunny days.

On his return to Copenhagen he heard that Esther, only the very day before, had embraced Christianity : she had been baptized by her own earnest desire, for without baptism she could not consider herself a Christian, and her life here and hereafter were concerned in this. This event made a great impression upon Niels Bryde, and drew him, as it were, to some self-examination.

He knew her firm conviction of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ—that God and Christ were one and the same ; he fully comprehended the blessed consolation which lay in such a belief, a belief which she, with her clear good sense, had adopted. He reflected upon the subject more seriously and deeply than he had ever done before. The principal object of his life was the search for truth and goodness. His idea of faith required that it should be supported by reasonable proofs : but the idea of faith, as Esther conceived and felt it, importing a spiritual trust, without positive knowledge and direct evidence, he could not bring himself to entertain. Religious faith, therefore, including a belief in the immortality of the soul, and everlasting life, that faith which must be received

much on trust, he could not recognise; although he was aware that in acknowledged science there was a great deal of theory.

There had been a time, as he confessed to Esther, that with the presumption of youth he had sought to place himself above the need of "God and immortality," but he had found himself compelled to relinquish such aspirations, to acknowledge the existence of God, and to feel a desire for everlasting life. The personality of Christ was less evident to his mind, and it was his opinion that in our time too much is thought of the Person, and too little of the doctrines, of that fountain of the Divinity.

When he thus recalled his opinions of former days, and reflected upon his present views, he sometimes came to the conclusion that in many things science and the Bible coincided wonderfully. He remembered the various stages in which, by him, belief in the Almighty had been, first rejected, then accepted.

No one can prove that there is a God; but neither can any one prove that there is not one. The laws of the creation demand as well as yield evidence of a Supreme Being. Thus now thought Niels Bryde. The world was created with materials which no chemist can describe or fathom; but a supreme power must have been exercised, or all would have been but a chaos. A breath of air was only needed to achieve this mighty work: "And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

In the words of the Bible lay that which alone was found wanting among materialists. The great enigma was solved in the Bible; in many portions of that Book, clearly and decidedly given, lay revealed, what the scientific inquirer only arrives at through profound study.

In the arid plains where no springs are found grow water-melons for refreshment, as if planted there on purpose for providential care; who is he that planted them? Who is he that provides food for the ant, and the most helpless insects? Such forethought for the comfort of the meanest creature's existence assures us that there cannot be less for what regards the first here in the creation—mankind; what nature teaches, Christ's words declare:

“Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” \*

It was through the Bible that Esther had acquired the knowledge that God and Christ are one. Even Niels Bryde himself knew that the religious doctrines of the Brahmins, the result of the reflections of philosophers, of the poet's brightest inspirations, could, if united, offer nothing more holy, more blessed, more consolatory than Christianity, and the latter was clear as noon-day, comprehensible to all. If this knowledge be the main point, that God and Christ are one, what

\* Matthew vi. 26.

need is there to believe in the separate person of Christ ?

“It is the more necessary,” said Esther.

There was a sort of religious tide flowing through his soul : Esther was the calm, clear, full moon, whose bright rays somewhat influenced the current. He was now a greater adept in theology than formerly, when “he was reading for orders.” The Bible, which he had so often read when he was a child, and in which subsequently he had often searched for passages, was the fountain to which he must betake himself ; there stood the living word ; not merely figurative expressions, she said to him.

He read in Matthew :

“And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

“Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said : Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”\*

He does not answer, I am he ; but thou hast said so : and adds the revelation of his Godhead in the following words, which he borrows from Daniel :

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.”†

\* Matthew xxvi. 63, 64. . † Daniel vii. 13.

The expressions, "Son of man," "Clouds of heaven," are well-known words of the prophet.

In the Gospel according to St. Matthew the Saviour asks, "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And the reply to that was—

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, which is in heaven."\*

He who taught us all to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven," could not He, the best and only one, peculiarly say, "My Father in heaven?"

In the Gospel according to St. John it is written :

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."† Here the mystery was explained which, to Esther, was impressive truth.

There was a struggle in his soul—the land conquered from unbelief—the immortality which might be. But in that he could not implicitly believe. If he could only bring himself to be convinced of that, every mystery would be explained; in his present state of mind, he had only got as far as to perceive that Christianity was a ray of light over the world, one of the mightiest channels of good used by the great disposer of human events for our benefit. Had Niels Bryde admitted as sincerely the immortality of the soul as he did the existence of a Supreme Being, then would in-

\* Matthew xvi. 15, 17.

† John i. 1, 14.

deed his mind have been illuminated by the clear light of truth—then would “the Word,” which was God and flesh, have come unto him ; then would he have been a believer.

“No powers of nature—no barriers of time or space—can hinder Christ from finding a way to the soul, since His kingdom has come, and will continue to come, vanquishing death ; distinguishing between the living and the dead, between earlier and later-born races, between a period of ignorance and a period of knowledge, all fatalism is done away with, whether individual human beings themselves choose to cling to or to reject a Saviour ! ”\*

Nevertheless Niels continued to read much of what was written by Feuerbach, Zeller, Vogt, and other celebrated authors, and if he did not yet condemn them, they no longer carried conviction to his mind. But one more step now, he felt he required, and that was to feel certainty on the subject of eternal life. “Believing *that*, and with the knowledge of the fact, that there is a God, I should reach the rest ! ” he said. Esther would not have agreed to this ; Bodil would have prayed that it might be so ; Herr Brusz would have said “Damned ! damned to all eternity ! ” but he was only a poor human being—overrun by, and buried in, arrogant self-sufficiency.

\* Martinsen.



## CHAPTER XXII.

## HERR SVANE.

"HERE is reading enough for the theological examination again!" said Herr Svane, one day that he paid a visit to his god-son, and saw lying on his table, the Bible, Martensen's "Christian Doctrines" and a copy of St. Augustine.

"You will also find here the Koran, and Zendavesta," said Niels, pointing to a pile of books, among which were the works of Vogt, Zeller, Schleiden, Liebig, and many others of the same stamp.

"What is to be got out of materialism?" said Herr Svane. "So it is *that* you are taken up with? Perhaps it may be a good comedy. Everything to depend on the mixing of materials! If one were to believe in this compound, which would make man only a machine, the rascal, the robber, the murderer, would be all in the highest degree respectable, for they could not be otherwise than they are according to the mixture of the stuffs; and yet they are put in prison, and even existence is taken from them sometimes! But the judges, of course, could not do otherwise than condemn

them, for they are composed of stuffs which compel them to pronounce judgment on those who have broken the law—and have them hanged or beheaded. The judges are innocent. It is the tragic in the materials ; there would be quite subject for a farce ; extremities meet.”

“I am very far from the condition in which you fancy me,” said Niels Bryde. “But I really do wish that you would carry out your idea of a fate in the mixing of the materials, and write a comedy upon it. Our age is longing for some novelty in the way of poetry, a Narcissus-image of itself, which might be hung up in the picture-gallery of futurity, and called the nineteenth century.”

“I am afraid that I have not got the ‘stuffs’ in me for it,” said Herr Svane. “Perhaps I might have ideas enough, but my soul possesses no knowledge of materialism ; I should also fear a failure—the public ought to be with me, or at least the publishers—these great omnibus drivers !”

“Why do you not write what you say, what you think ?” asked Niels.

“Oh, like Jeppe ! I cannot for three reasons ; but it is not with me as with him—‘want of courage,’ fear of ‘Mester Erich,’ or ‘an exceedingly benign temper.’ No. In the first place, it is too much trouble ; in the next place, I cannot retain my thoughts and sayings till I can get them committed to paper ; and lastly, I have a preference for leading a free and peaceful life. Were

I in truth a genius, and determined to show myself off, though I might be smothered in laurels at first, I might expect to be crucified by the critics on the morrow."

"Herr Svane, you speak almost as if you were an anonymous author, who had been shamefully treated. Was it you who wrote the comedy, 'Witchcraft?' It was clever, pointed, and so full of spirit, that a few little dramatic errors might well have been excused; but the Copenhagen public almost damned it; it was sneered at, and even hissed. And yet the most talented actors performed in it, and performed *con amore* too."

"I shall never write for a theatre except, perhaps, in another world, where the public will undergo an examination before they are permitted to enter. The director must at least be a professor of æsthetics."

"One must not hide one's talent however; even the Bible tells us this in the parable. Stupid critics soon vent their fumes, and though they may spit ever so spitefully on one—to be sure that is always disagreeable—still the venom evaporates; it is like a dirty puddle, if you do not stir it when it is wet; but let it stand for four-and-twenty hours, it will turn into mud."

"Very likely; but shall I allow myself to be provoked and mortified for twenty-four hours? No—no; I am fortunately compounded of such stuffs, that I can take a pleasure in literature, without dabbling in it.

All I want is permission to enjoy it myself, but I wish to have nothing to do with other people. Everybody thinks himself competent to pronounce judgment on the productions of literature and art—the multitude say these are matters of taste—I say they are matters of thought. People speak of the arts, as they do of the wind and the weather, though wind and weather are the more favoured subject. I have a right to give my opinion, too, says the cheesemonger, and so says his wife; and they are both so cultivated in mind of course, as well as being such respectable tradespeople, that we must yield deference to their decrees. The public, who is a person of high consideration, who may possess orders and chamberlains' keys\*—that is to say, honours before and behind—he is a great man, before whom one bows down to the ground, though he is not always too clean—I beg his pardon—I did not mean to say that; the public—that discriminating mass—who at the theatres laugh foolishly, applaud foolishly, and vitiate talent. Sometimes I fancy I hear from the orchestra the sound of 'Public! stupid, stupid, stupid!'

"But this said Public is much the same in all countries and at all times!" said Niels Bryde. "The public is like a river that is always changing its colour according to what is reflected on its surface, and what it carries with itself; it rolls on—rolls on—it is never the same water, yet always the same river. Sometimes

\* The chamberlain's gold key is worn on the coat behind.

it dashes against rocks, and then it looks muddy ; but the mud is from the river, not from the rock."

"Time," said Herr Svane, "when one can wait for its slow course, does justice to all. Commendation is awarded to those who deserve it, while those who do not are dismissed to their proper sphere ; I believe with Goethe :—

" ' Alle Schuld rächt sich auf Erden ! ' "

Else I should have let alone writing my only book, giving my *Jury sentence* respecting ' Home in our days ! ' "

" Only book ! " exclaimed Niels Bryde. " Then have you really written one ? "

" I have written two," said Herr Svane. " Great Doomsday, and Little Doomsday," but the books are not so named—neither are they ready yet, and I don't think I shall live to see them published. One of them, which mostly appertains to our present conversation, is a record I have made of the personages and events of my own day, here at home ; those who and which are now seen through the spectacles of party or misrepresentation. I give on the written pages, taken down as if from word of mouth, the truth without exaggeration or ill-will. The manuscript may lie by till half a century after my death, and then—ah, good people! you will not know which of you stands in Herr Svane's book ; or what I clear up. I have put great and small down, and clothed them so—that they might go to bed—if they had clear consciences," he added, with a good-humoured smile.

"So that is the Great Doomsday: but where is the scene of the Little Doomsday?"

"In the theatre—where so many are doomed—the public are introduced, those about whom I was speaking not in the most complimentary manner. You may have a specimen of it, if you like."

"I shall return thanks when I get it," said Niels Bryde; "neither of your Great or your Little Doomsday shall I or the world ever obtain a glimpse, you really ought to read and lay to heart the parable of the entrusted talents. You have a poet's nature."

"I would not be a poet," said Herr Svane, "even if I could get gold and green woods by it! That is to say—a competence while I lived, and fame after my death. A real poet must have pretty much the same sensation as a poor eel who has been skinned and allowed to escape back into a stream, where it is tough enough to live, and where it hears the other fish exclaim: 'How irritable he is! can he not bear it!' Envy and compassion are the two poles in our characters; we cannot endure any one to raise himself above the ordinary level. If any one does that, down with him! If any one falls too deeply in the mire, all hearts are touched, and we lift him out of it forthwith! We can amuse ourselves at a comedy, laugh from first to last, but when the curtain falls, we each become a critic, and find out that there was really nothing at all to laugh at, and we are ready to hiss. Can any one care to encounter such caprice? If one become a

poet, one must do without one's eel's-skin. Though I live but in a small street where there is only a spiritual foot pavement for a select few, it is pleasanter to indulge in the *dolce far niente*, than join those who show their intellect by measuring and rejecting."

"You were in excellent humour when you came here," said Niels Bryde. "Do not talk yourself out of it, and into the dark mood. I fancy already that I see a frown gathering on your eyebrows. You are one of those men, with whose internal machinery, in a spiritual sense, I had most desire to become acquainted; I should have liked to have understood these vibrations of the nerves between hard and soft, set in motion by exterior currents."

"But what if it were in the string itself!" said Herr Svane, while his voice sank almost to a tone of sadness. "It is more in the amber than in the friction, that the phenomenon shows itself; it is in the sympathetic ink, and not in the breast; and that which was once written, but had disappeared, stands out again: every human being, even the most commonplace, has a private chamber, wherein is a sounding-board, to which the strings are fastened, and from it come their soft and hard! I, too, have my private chamber; it contains many inscriptions, but I only read these by the light of ill-humour's lamp."

"And these inscriptions," said Niels Bryde, "to what do they relate; will you give me an example?"

"To believe in no one, not even in yourself! If

any one have done you an injury, beware of him ; he will, for the sake of silencing his own conscience, endeavour to cast blame on you, to find out faults in you, and, by exposing these, to excuse himself. Chance often counsels better than good sense. You must not buy women or ribbons by candlelight, you cannot be sure of having seen their natural colours. This last among my maxims is now almost a proverb, and I have many others of the same kind."

Herr Svane had actually talked himself into his splenetic humour, his "dark mood." He wrung his young friend's hand, went straight home, locked his door, threw himself on his sofa, and more and more strongly vibrated the strings from the private chamber in his heart.

In the poems which celebrate romantic and marvelous adventures, two conceptions belonging to the popular Danish fairy, or allegorical lore, have been particularly brought on the scene: sleep, with its dreams, in the form of *Ole Luköie*, and memory, with its strength, as *Hyldemoer*, the dryad in the garden's old elder tree ; but the illusions have also their personification, as the poet shows us in the popular superstition relative to the "Lygtemand" ("Will o' the wisp"). Whilst *Ole Luköie* flew from the unfortunate Herr Svane, and *Hyldemoer* spread her elder-blossoming mantle over him, the principal figure who appeared to him was the *Lygtemand*, the lord of illusions, the demon with the glittering magic-lantern pictures. He had



shot at him with his magic balls ; he who entices us into bogs and marshes, the red man with the lantern on his head, the shifting flame of which leads but to destruction, he had allured the unfortunate Herr Svane from the paths of profitable occupation to those of wild speculation ; he had, with his magic illumination, invested with ideal beauty the protectress of Zemire, whose tongue was like an aspen leaf, whose intellectuality was mere babbling. Herr Svane had believed in mankind and womankind as he saw them through the magic glass of the Lygtemand, and had shaped his course accordingly ; thus he had been misled, and his genius, talents, worth, and powers of all kinds, had been of no avail to him. His feelings then became embittered, and he ranged himself under the banner of irony and satire ; but these sometimes weighed like the nightmare on his breast, he would become discontented with himself, and lock himself up ; his thoughts would then shape themselves into imagery like the following :—

“The high gods collected a number of bulbs, pressed the kiss of inspiration on each, and bestowed on them the power of blooming in beauty ; but the high gods slept upon it, and next morning they took only a couple of the bulbs, and stuck them in the ground ; these grew to be their delight and that of the world, the others were thrown away, and they lay and put forth wild shoots without flowers ; sickly, wasted, spoiled were they all !”

He became also quite a fatalist ; and this conviction

he said he had not adopted from Mahomet's doctrines, but from the writings of Christians. "Some men are destined to happiness, others to endure trouble!" He repeated Calvin's words:—

"I say, with St. Augustine, that there are human beings created by God, whom He has predestined, as a settled matter, to go to destruction, and this has been done because He willed it so."

Herr Svane believed that our paths in life were marked out for us, all predetermined; the Bible said, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Not a sparrow shall "fall on the ground without your Father."

The followers of Mahomet had in their creed this truth, "our fates are predestined," and in this belief would Herr Svane cast himself on his couch until his soul and his body recovered their equipoise. Then, a bright glittering star, a ray of the sun, the view from his window over the sea, in a moment would work a revolution in his mind; the rainbow of good humour would shine forth with its brilliantly-coloured arch on the dark sky of melancholy, idea would follow idea, like a flight of birds in the air, his spirit would cheer up, and Herr Svane would again laugh at himself and at all mankind.

Niels Bryde would, in his earlier days, when he was quite devoted to materialism, have traced these variations of humour to a little lump of fat, or some coagulated blood, occupying a corner of the brain; the

whole intellectual human machine, hinging upon so little ! We are now glad to be able to announce that before the expiration of the year another circumstance had occurred to influence Herr Svane, and to put him into that good humour which we hope he will always retain ; and as we are now speaking of him, we will hear about his good fortune, before we finally part with him.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

WHAT BECAME OF HERR SVANE, MADAM JENSEN, AND HERR  
MEIBUM.

HERR SVANE'S good luck was, that he won a prize in the lottery ; not the highest prize of all, but enough to rejoice at ; about as much as he required, according to himself, to make him comfortable in his old age. He won 25,000 rix dollars. We may remember his hoax in the newspapers about "Genius and false alarm." It was called a good idea, and such ideas have always their prototype in the real. The story of the two brothers, of whom the one was commonplace, and all prospered with him, the other a genius, and all went badly with him ; so that at length, during his illness, he was obliged to ask pecuniary assistance from his brother, and received about as much as the price of a lottery ticket, bought one, and obtained the highest prize—all this might have taken place between Herr Svane and his brother "the General." It did not so happen, but it might have done so, and thence arose the idea, which after much wavering worked its way into a resolution, which was carried out after the lapse

of two years. A lottery ticket was bought, and after many hopes and fears, in this drama of the imagination, it ended, as all plays should end, in unexpected good fortune. The 25,000 rix dollars were won, and the interest of that amount, Herr Svane—like the neglected genius written about in jest—was to receive. When his affairs assumed this favourable aspect, it may be supposed he recovered his good humour.

The first who was to receive tidings of his good fortune was his godson Niels Bryde, who almost at the same time became to Madam Jensen a friend in need. She had come to him, in a matter of the deepest importance; she had been mistaken about her servant-girl, Ane Sophie, who had married, not the young man down-stairs, but another, who was not hired for a certain time. She had left him to better herself. She was still young, but she had become a Mormon, and she was most anxious to win Madam Jensen over to that sect, but *she* had found out that there was nothing very promising in this new religion. They said that the world would be at an end in ten years, and that the only living creatures who would then retain life would be the Mormons, and they would be the whole world. There were numbers who went to America, where the Mormons had their principal settlement, and both coffee and sugar grew over there; all the labour was done there by black men. Moreover, all property was in common, and the richest families belonging to the sect resided there. All this was

very inviting, and Madam Jensen had almost made up her mind to go with Ane Sophie, but the greengrocer had told her that there was not a word of truth in the whole story ; on the contrary, much untruth. That the common men had two wives, and the bishop had fifty. That was surely very immoral, said Madam Jensen, and the greengrocer had showed it to her in print. But Ane Sophie had said that there could be nothing wrong or to scandalize any one in it, for the law did not attempt to interfere with them, and they had the original Bible, which was printed many thousand years before ours. She had come to Herr Bryde to elucidate the matter ; for, as she said, she felt a good deal at a loss what to think about it. Niels Bryde gave the same opinion as the greengrocer had done ; Herr Svane also was eloquent on that side, told of his success in the lottery, and advised Madam Jensen, instead of seeking her fortune in the Mormon land, to go and take a lottery ticket. The advice made so much impression upon her, that she bought a ticket, and Ane Sophie took a share in it. They did not win, neither did they emigrate, for they could not go until they had ascertained how the numbers were drawn.

Niels Bryde at first thought that the story of Herr Svane's having won 25,000 rix dollars was merely a fiction—a quiz—the offspring of his gay humour ; but the money was really paid—the report spread far and wide, and there was no lack of warm con-

gratulations. Among these came a note from a friend of his youthful days, who had not won in the lottery. He did not ask for any money, but only for a visit at the public hospital, if good fortune had not made the formerly kind-hearted Herr Svane too proud. The note was from Herr Meibum, he who had once given a large party, but who had been going back in the world, as might have been discovered latterly by his threadbare clothes that looked so white, his soiled boots worn out of shape, and his shabby hat. Once, about two years before, he had stopped Herr Svane and borrowed a trifle of money. "I am not a toper," said he; "I am only very poor. My clothes are old and stained; in order to remove the stains I got some brandy; I only got it for the stains, and they disappeared, but the perfume of the brandy remained, and it is that which at this moment tells a false tale about me. I might have drunk wine until I was tipsy, but I would not have had this smell of brandy about me."

It was he whom Herr Svane was about to visit at the hospital.

"Well, I will not invite you to see high life this time!" said he to Niels Bryde, as he took his way alone to the great musty-looking human ark.

It was the dinner hour when he got there. The assistants brought in the victuals in bowls and jugs; sickly-looking, miserable-looking figures paced slowly by. He fancied he recognised some of them, whom

he had formerly seen smartly dressed and apparently well off. All exhibited the threadbare side of life.

He passed through a lobby where were piled up the superfluous furniture that belonged to the poor inmates, and which they had brought with them; it was as full of them as an omnibus on "fitting day." From this passage he entered a large room, where bed stood by bed, and their occupants had each a sort of little closet that served as eating-room, cellar, and wardrobe—it also contained a chair. The room was for men alone. One was mending his clothes, another was reading, another spreading bread and butter. Herr Meibum was standing doing nothing, and apparently thinking of nothing; one of his eyes was blue and swelled, he had had an attack of giddiness in the head, and having fallen, had hurt himself against his little table. Upon it were heaped sundry manuscripts, a volume of comedies, some pickled pork, and some ink in a liqueur glass.

"Favourite of Fortune!" exclaimed Herr Meibum; 25,000 rix dollars condescends to honour me with a visit!" He cried this out so loudly, and with so much emphasis, that every head in the room was instantly turned towards Herr Svane; the book sank on the floor, the mending was arrested, the bread but half buttered; it seemed as if Plutus, the god of riches in Aristophanes' comedy, had stalked into the public hospital.

"You see to what I have come!" said Herr



Meibum, smiling bitterly ; ‘ *Das ist das Loos des Schönen hier auf Erden.*’ But we are now at the last act. Camoens was not so well off, nor did he ever receive such a visit as I have to-day.”

Herr Svane felt deeply impressed by the place and the surrounding objects. He thought, “What if my future days were to have been like his? Why am I better off—I have deserved no more than he did!” Then came a flood of sad thoughts over him, and he felt that he could not without some circumlocution offer money to Herr Meibum. He should have some though, and he commenced in a roundabout way.

“The world is a stage: had I been playing your part, and you mine; had I sat here and written to you, you would have come to me, and would have brought me something to give me pleasure, and I would have received it. Perhaps you might like to go to the theatre, or to procure some little comfort, and I hope you will not be offended at this—from a friend.”

So saying, he put some gold pieces into Herr Meibum’s hand; but the latter soon showed how unnecessary had been his delicacy, by saying—

“I am come down so low, that you can offer me what you please.”

The conversation was not animated, though Herr Meibum talked noisily; it ended by his proposing to make over his excellent dramatic manuscripts to Herr Svane, as they would come out better under the name

of a rich man. Herr Svane gave no encouragement to the proposition, and when he took his departure, these words rang through the room :—

“ Farewell, my old and valued friend ! I congratulate you on the 25,000 rix dollars ! ”

This visit did more good to Herr Svane than any sermon could have done. He felt how fortunate he was, what mercy had been extended to him. The lottery ticket and Herr Meibum’s letter were memory’s antidotes against bad humour. And now we may bid adieu to Herr Svane, who continued to reside in his garret, but fitted up his apartments with carpets and double windows, so comfortable in winter ; and in summer he had the sea before his eyes, where the whole world came to him !

But *we* must return to Niels Bryde.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## CHOLERA.

NEW days of trial were again in store for Denmark—trials much heavier than those the war had brought—also days sadder for Niels Bryde; and yet days of awakening to light and life !

The period of the war had indeed pressed heavily on the Danes, but it had imparted a moral power ; it had produced a spirit of unanimity in addition to that of patriotism, which had always prevailed, and even in the arts imperishable souvenirs had been won. Many of the songs composed at that time will live as long as Danish poetry exists ; that song, breathing of victory and joy, "The Gallant Volunteer," was given to us from the camp ; on the glowing canvas we have Sonne's splendid battle-pieces, and Elizabeth Jerichau's "Denmark," the Danish peasant-girl in a coat of mail, with her golden hair flowing loose over her neck, and only confined on her brow by the celebrated golden ring, ploughed up in the olden times ; waving the Danish flag, and with a drawn sword, she is seen advancing boldly through the rustling Danish corn-

fields; a genial picture—one of the flashes in the world of arts, which carries a charm with it, even though commemorating so sad and bloody a period.

But without any traits of chivalry, or compositions of beauty to relieve its gloom, came a new calamity over the country; people were breathless with fear, and the earth yawned for its prey. As in the land of Egypt, in one night Death went from door to door, and seized the firstborn in each family; so among us, from house to house, Terror and Death—two frightful spectres—stalked. From the burning plains of India came, with poison in its breath, the devouring pestilence; boldly it entered everywhere, and ruthlessly swept away its victims. The *cholera* was in Copenhagen !

The gloomy catalogue of the dead increased day by day; heaps of coffins were made in silence; the graves could not be dug fast enough! Friends and relatives fled from each other. But two classes preserved their self-possession, and performed their duties faithfully—courageously; these were the clergy and the medical men—the religious and the scientific. Here then science and religion met. In that period of anxiety, of suffering, and of depression, how brightly among *them* shone energy, endurance, and humanity, we all know; yet how often faith triumphed, where science failed!

Every one who was able to do it forsook the city; business, indeed, was still carried on as usual, but not

with its accustomed cheerfulness and keenness. Every day were heard among the names of the dead, those of relations, friends, or at least acquaintances. Neils Bryde was quite overworked ; he, who was in general always so well-dressed, was now to be seen constantly in the most careless attire. Day and night he was called to the bed of sickness ; upon that, and upon death, all his conversation turned.

The Arons' family had removed into the country—to the seaside ; Herr Arons alone came to town, to his office, twice a-week, and there was anxiety when he drove off for town—joy when he returned home.

“These days of trial, however,” he said, “were in some respects pleasing. People drew more towards each other ; persons whom before you only knew well enough to bow to, spoke now in a friendly manner when they met you in the streets. Ceremony and stiffness were for a time laid aside. One distinguished couple were daily to be seen ; they had remained in town, and it gave confidence to the poorer classes, who could not remove from it, that those who could so easily have fled to a distance, had remained to run the same risk as those whom poverty and necessity detained. I take off my hat,” he continued, “more respectfully than ever to this royal couple—they are the Heir presumptive and his consort. I shall never forget this noble sacrifice on their part. I have also been much interested in a story I have heard of a young Copenhagen lady, whose father, during his life-

time, belonged to the higher official classes, and I am assured it is quite true. Impelled by the goodness of her heart, she went the other evening to the hospital, and without mentioning who she was, offered herself as an attendant to watch by, and wait on, the cholera patients. She had forbidden her maid to let her name and station in society be known. Not being received at that hospital, she went to the common hospital, and there, as they were in great want of sick nurses, she was immediately employed. And they say that she is quite a blessing to this hospital. She moves about in felt slippers—quiet, unobtrusive, like a good spirit—she watches by night, she assists by day—she is, indeed, ‘a Sister of Mercy.’ Were I a poet, I would celebrate her in song, or had I decorations to bestow, she should have one. That young girl is a sister of CLARA RAPHAEL.”

“These two sisters belong to the nobility of the mind and the heart,” cried Esther; “I feel how much I love the quiet, self-sacrificing sister, whose labours are hidden from the world; but also I honour the other—so richly endowed by talent.”

One day the merchant brought Niels Bryde out with him, the family had not seen him during the whole of the long cholera time. He was that day quite over-fatigued, quite exhausted, and nearly ill; Herr Arons had, therefore, almost forced him to drive out with him to the country, and spend a few hours with his family,

it would at least afford him a little relaxation, a little change of scene and air.

They did not converse much on the way ; it seemed as if everything wore a hue of sadness ; even the open shore, the corn-fields, and the bright sunshine, looked gloomy.

It was only on reaching the cool, pleasant country house that Niels felt better and more cheerful ; his kind friends did all they could to enliven him, and his spirits soon rose.

Esther was that day looking more beautiful than ever, and her charming countenance beamed with intelligence.

Herr Arons gave the bulletin of the day ; and then he entreated that, for the rest of the evening, nothing more should be said about sickness or death ; “ Herr Bryde ought to have a little respite from these subjects.”

“ We will, as in Boccacio’s ‘ Decamerone,’ ” said Esther, “ suppose ourselves far distant from the infected Florence, and live only to speak of the beautiful.”

“ But unhappily,” said Niels Bryde, “ I have not Boccacio’s genius to transform the old gold-dust of forgotten authors into genuine statues of gold for all time ; to me it almost seems as if the arts and the beautiful were wiped out of the world and my own thoughts. I have only from reality the picture-frame

in which Boccacio placed his Decamerone, and I do not wish to contemplate that either in him, or Thucydides, Manzoni, or Bulwer."

"Well, we shall throw all this to one side," said Esther; "nevertheless these days of distress bring also their flowers, as the sad days of war brought theirs."

"No—no!" cried Niels Bryde. "These present days of affliction bear no flowers. The slime of depression is over everything; the greedy, clammy grave-worm is crawling about, and destroys all that is fresh and flowering."

"They will awaken serious thoughts in many a breast, where, perhaps, else these would lie dormant," said Esther. "People feel that it is well to be ready when their hour comes; for let one be ever so strong, so healthy, so safe, we all know what a few hours may bring about—that many have been carried off in that time, and the warning is good for us. There is a blessing in being thus aroused. I believe that during this period of tribulation, many have thought more of our Saviour than they had done in the course of whole years before; and this awakening of the spirit is indeed a grace. We require, now and then, a sharp reminder of our frail hold on this life, else our sensibilities would become wrapped up in the material objects around us. You see, I look upon what is material according to my own fashion. I am pleased with it, in as far as I would be to see the masons



and the carpenters work on the trembling scaffold ; I know that a fine building will be the result of their labours."

Niels Bryde smiled ; it seemed as if he were about to answer by some objection or disavowal, but he stopped himself, and merely said,—

"Let us not fight about the extent of knowledge that belongs to materialism, nor even to science ; we know so little !"

"Sincerely, however," exclaimed Esther, "I hold science and material productions in very different estimation from what you think ;" and she looked at him with a smile so full of meaning and soul, that it seemed to light up all her features.

Animated conversation has a power, an elasticity, a charm, which in a very short time draws one on, as it were, from the most opposite subjects of thought, and causes a transition as wonderful as it is imperceptible, in one's spirits and state of feeling. Esther had speedily led the conversation to what was great and important in the present time, to the wonders of science and nature, and the advantages these yielded to mankind. The conversation became very lively ; no one thought anything further about the cholera, about the death-bells that were ringing throughout the alarmed town, and the death's-oases around it.

"I am often astonished," said Esther, "on reflecting how many great inventions and discoveries have been made during even my short lifetime, or close upon it ;

there are steam-ships, railways, magnetic wires, daguerreotypes—they so wonderfully connect places and people—distance is annihilated, and towns and people are made known to each other with so much ease !”

“And animals also,” said Niels Bryde, as he told how it had been sought to transport from Berlin to Paris breeds of fish which were not found in the French rivers.

“It is the age of novelties,” said Esther ; “mankind has obtained power over many things. The desert of Sahara may soon be turned into a lake ; an engineer, I read lately, has proposed to allow the Mediterranean Sea, which lies higher up, to pour over the widely-stretching sandy plain, and then steamers will soon be speeding across that desert where lie hid the bones of so many camels and caravan travellers.”

“This will take place,” said Niels Bryde, “or else they will, by boring far down, obtain gushing springs in the wilderness of sand ; oasis after oasis will then arise around these springs, and extend themselves more and more, until the desert shall become a blooming plain.”

“By steamers and railways almost the whole world can be traversed, and those who do not go themselves, can see in the sun-pictures which photography gives us, the monuments and buildings and landscapes of other countries. The learned, who decypher the inscriptions in the most remote corners of India, can thus transfer to paper the results of their researches,

and transmit them to the quiet studies of the learned at home. What light from the Almighty streams over our age ! No Æolian harp has ever played so sweet a melody for me, as this harp of recent date, whose multitude of strings now carry tidings from place to place : the electro-magnetic Budstikke that flies with the celerity of light ! My heart beats faster when I remember that the first idea of this was suggested by a Dane."

"I heard from Oersted himself," said Niels Bryde, "in a small circle of friends where I was so fortunate as to meet him, how delighted he was with his discovery ; and he was so struck with it, that he went immediately to the residence of the Danish minister of State, Schimmelmänn, whose house was then known as the rendezvous of all that was talented in Copenhagen. Stolberg and Klopstock used to visit there formerly ; afterwards, Baggesen, Øelenschläger, and of course all the most distinguished of the nobility and official gentlemen. Oersted explained his discovery, and it was whispered elsewhere, at least, that an individual of very superior 'greatness,' patted Oersted on the shoulder, and said, 'This may be very amusing, but what is the use of it ? Of what use will it be ?' 'I cannot, at this moment, exactly say of what use it will be,' replied Oersted, gravely ; 'but I am convinced it *will* be of use !' He lived to see its use, and we have done so too. From the most distant shore of Europe thought flies like light, and is answered again.

When these wonderful wires are spread in America from north to south, and the hurricane, which goes forth destroying day and night on its stormy course, is raging at some distant point, the electric telegraph will speedily communicate the intelligence of its ravages, and the wary merchant or shipowner will know that he must detain his ships until the tempest has passed away. There is one use which can be made of it, and which may already have been made of it, for all that I know."

"And how far may not its uses extend! to what may they not be carried!"

"I do not at all doubt," said Niels Bryde, in a jesting tone of voice, "that, in a few years hence, practice may have so improved our knowledge of this medium of communication, that the great geniuses of the day will not need to come to us in person. A Liszt, a Thalberg, a Dreyschock may make use of the electro-magnetic wires, put in communication with the pianoforte; we may go to the theatre, a concert room here in Copenhagen, and Liszt remain in Weimar, Thalberg in Paris, Dreyschock in Prague, and play duets, or concerted pieces, and we shall hear them at the concert. The applause must necessarily be telegraphed to them, and likewise information when an encore is called for."

Niels Bryde laughed and joked about his idea; and thus, between jest and earnest, he by degrees regained his spirits. He had never found Esther more lively,

more interesting, or more captivating than on this occasion, and he fancied that they seemed to sympathize more in feelings, and be more united in soul than they had ever been before.

"Happy are those," said Esther, "who have looked around them in the world—who have had the good fortune to see and to hear the representatives of the talents of the age, the distinguished few who elevate the period in which they live ! Yes, it is delightful to have seen the elect, the great ones of the age, seen them among us every-day people. I am rejoiced that I have face to face beheld Thorwaldsen, Oersted, Œhlenschläger—I thank God for this. But oh ! how much higher the privilege," she exclaimed, suddenly, while her face was lighted up with pious enthusiasm—"how much higher the privilege to those whom God permits, in the fulness of time, to behold Him who was born in Bethlehem, and who died for races yet unborn ! What blessedness to behold *Him* face to face !" and Esther's eyes shone with a glance of almost celestial love and beauty ; her appearance at that moment was for all future time engraved on the soul of her friend—friend, did we say ?—from that instant he was something more, the transformation was completed.

It was the intellectual charm—the mind speaking in her countenance, which had awakened that admiration and sympathy, of which he was hardly aware, and upon which he had never reflected. Her voice sounded like music, her conversation had an interest, much

greater than it had ever before possessed. The love of knowledge and mental cultivation which Esther had so fully evinced echoed the most cherished tones of his own mind.

Niels Bryde had entirely thrown off his languor, and he became quite animated as he went on to speak of the relation which should exist between science and modern poetry, and expressed his pleasure at the luminous manner in which Oersted had discussed this subject,\* and how marvellous he himself thought it was, that enlightened men should not seem to be able to comprehend that the poet ought to stand on the highest pinnacle of the development of his age, to cast what was now quite antiquated away into the rusty old chambers of bygone poetry, and employ the spirit of science to create his Aladdin's palace.

"I am convinced," said Esther, "that in our day, under the whizzing of machinery's busy wheels, the hissing of steam, and all the stirring sounds which now are heard, a new race of poetical heroes will arise, called up by the spiritual wand of science. But science cannot give them life. Nouredin, with all his knowledge, was not competent to descend into the cavern, and remove the treasure. Little David was stronger than the giant Goliath. It is the innocent who reach the goal: children belong to the kingdom of Heaven, pureness of mind, like childhood's, attains

\* "The Relation between Natural Science and Poetry," by Hans Christian Oersted.

it; and to this must be added wisdom, with its strength and knowledge. I think that the poetry which has the widest range is that of the romantic and marvellous kind; it stretches from the blood-reeking graves of ancient times, to the pleasant little legends in children's picture books; it includes within itself popular poetry and more refined poetry; it is, to my idea, the representation of all poetry. In legendary lore there is always a Klods Hans, or, as the Norwegians call him, Askeladen, who at length, however, becomes the conqueror—he rides up the glass hill and wins the princess. Thus also poetical simplicity—overlooked and scorned by his brethren—though furthest forward—makes his way up to poetry, the king's daughter, and wins her and her wealth."

"The acting principle in us," said Niels Bryde, "the manifestation of the Creator, is the soul and sublimity of poetry; but the limbs, the stuffs, the composition which leaped forth, moulded by the power of wisdom and science, these all for centuries will undergo various changes, like shreds of clothing; whilst poetry, the soul, has immortality."

"Immortality!" exclaimed Esther; and she involuntarily seized his hand, and held it fast, whilst she gazed inquiringly in his face, for his last words had, as it were, floated over a deep abyss to her; did he now believe in an everlasting life—or were other thoughts of it hovering in her mind?

It was now late in the evening; Niels Bryde had to

leave the kind and friendly circle, the carriage was awaiting him at the door. Mild eyes looked adieu, lights were blazing in the rooms; how lovely Esther looked, how melodiously sounded her farewell! Niels Bryde thought only of her. Love, how great is thy power! The very air seemed to breathe of bliss. All was calm and peaceful around him, and in his heart there burned a clear, purifying flame. It was now evident to himself that he adored Esther; she was his first, his only love. With her as his companion he could pass his whole life happily on the lonesome heath, away from all the clamour, the scandal, the folly that so often provoked him amidst the busy haunts of society. He almost forgot himself in thinking of her; selfish egotism vanished beneath the wonderful might of love! Did she love him in return? That was a question he soon asked himself; he must ascertain this—she must know his feelings.

With thoughts full of love, and of happy and peaceful future days, he drove into the silent, death-struck town, where Death went from house to house, and called away parents, children, relatives, and domestics.



## CHAPTER XXV.

## IMMORTALITY.

IMMEDIATELY on his return to town Niels Bryde was called to see the sick, and at the earliest dawn of day he awoke and went to visit the dying in a small, poor-looking house in Adelgade. Here all was dirty, disorderly, and uncomfortable; a toilsome, dilapidated staircase led up to a garret room, where, amidst weeping children, lay two dying persons. It was a chamber consecrated to death, but the wailing was for poverty.

“Mother is dying! and grandfather is dying too!” sobbed and screamed the little ones.

Niels Bryde recognised the man, although he had only seen him once before; that was at his own lodgings. The ruling thought, which he had then expatiated upon, still haunted him in the hour of death. His “Tread-machine,” that had never been brought into use, and now never would be—it was his last thought in life; and his daughter, near to death as she was, thought of her children, who were fatherless, and would soon be motherless. It was a sad spectacle—a painful, depressing scene; yet in Niels

Bryde's heart life and happiness were beating high. Even here, in this abode of misery, as everywhere he went, *she* was present to his thoughts—nay, almost always before his eyes stood the image of Esther, so fresh-looking, so beautiful, the representative of health and life.

All that passed around him—the terrible scenes he was compelled to witness, were but as a hideous dream, from which he should soon awake; the future danced before him in the richest and brightest colours; it never entered his mind how near to himself trod Death, how soon *he* might also be called. When one is young, there is a feeling in us as if we were never to die, or at least that death is so very, very far removed from us, so lost in the obscurity of a distant future, that it need not now agitate our nerves of thought; we have still before us a long lifetime, full of hope and promise: and thus felt Niels Bryde.

The whole morning was spent in the labours of his profession; at length he felt quite fatigued, and threw himself upon his sofa for an hour's repose.

But he was soon awakened: a message had come from Herr Arons; Esther had been taken ill, her family were in the greatest consternation, and the physician who had attended them in Copenhagen had been sent for; but she had expressed a wish to see Niels Bryde, therefore the carriage had been despatched for him.

Niels Bryde experienced a shock such as he had

never before felt. Esther ill ! She, whom but the previous day he had seen glowing in health, and sparkling with animation ! He threw himself into the carriage, and bade the coachman drive fast. Sad faces met him.

“She is dying !” said the mother. “Her whole countenance has changed.”

“That need not cause any fear,” said Niels Bryde, though he felt his heart beat faster.

He entered her neat bedroom, the walls of which were covered with engravings. Esther was lying with her eyes closed, pale, with features expressive of exhaustion ; the cold grasp of Death had already changed her countenance—for that she was about to become his prey, there could not be a doubt. That face, yesterday so lighted up with smiles, so sparkling with intellect, so blooming with health, how altered it was ! The features were sharp, the smile round her mouth was a furrow, and under the closed eyes, hitherto so full of intelligence, was a dark blue line. She opened her eyes, after a time, and looked about her ; she perceived that Niels Bryde was there, but it was only as if through a mist that she saw him. He felt her breathing ; it was ice-cold, like the air in a deep, cold well in summer time.

“Thank you for coming,” she said ; her voice sounded as if it had come from a distance. “Only tell me, will it be over soon ? Science says that this is——”

"DEATH!" said Niels Bryde, involuntarily and calmly—he was stupefied by this unexpected misfortune. Everything seemed swimming round with him.

"And Faith says," she whispered, "it is LIFE!"—she pronounced the last word with emphasis, while she pressed his hand in hers. It was not a moment for conversation, not another word was said. Her eyes seemed to sink deeper in, and as when warm air passes over a figure of ice, it loses its impressed shape, thus annihilation passed over that form the soul's image of beauty, her hand became like marble, and yet it grasped firmly. "It is life!" These three words were the bridge between "TO BE, OR NOT TO BE?" here, amidst those who loved her.

"She is dead!" sobbed her mother.

"Dead!" was echoed around, but not uttered by Niels Bryde, he had not that word on his lips or in his mind. Esther, in whom were centred his happiest thoughts, she the bright, clear, living spirit, away—extinguished! Extinguished like a fire, with nothing but ashes remaining of her! Ashes that never more could be revived! No, he could not entertain that thought, could not admit that idea; he felt convinced that she was not dead, passed for ever from consciousness and life into nothingness.

Again he heard around him the wailing cry, "dead, dead!" He got up, silent and giddy; it seemed as if the blood were about to gush from his heart, but not

a tear was in his eye, nor could he utter a word. On the outside of the house he gasped for breath for a time, and in about a quarter of an hour he stood again by the bed of death; he contemplated the corpse, it was not Esther that he saw, changed, strange, lay there a senseless, lifeless body! It was not *that* he loved, not *that* he lamented—*SHE* was away from him.

It is on the departure in death of those who are dearest to us that the voice of God speaks most convincingly to us of eternal life, and meeting yonder again. Niels felt this. "To die, to sleep, perchance to dream," this idea triumphed over "*Not to be!*"

"She sleeps sweetly," said her father, who had till then stood still in speechless grief, as Niels Bryde also stood.

"Sleeps!" exclaimed the latter, almost without his lips conveying a sound; "the dead do not sleep! The New Testament itself does not call the dead the sleeping. Where is now that sparkling intellect, that fountain of thought, that bright intelligence, that lofty longing after knowledge and truth—where and what?" His heart asked the question, but reason had no answer. "What have the wisest in all ages discovered respecting the state after death? Nothing—nothing but phantasies, guesses, men's own imaginations! Pindar, in one of his Olympic hymns of victory, indicates the abode of the good to be in a land of shadows, before they arrive at the islands of

the blessed. In Plato's 'Phædo,' freedom from the subterranean places is spoken of, and reaching brighter dwellings over the earth. What do we learn from all this? Only so much, that the heathens themselves had felt the desire and need for something indefinite after this life. The dead sleep," he continued; "thus the poets of our day sing! How untrue! No; even the dust that lies in the grave does not sleep, it becomes something; and the soul—the true believing Christians, as they are called, say it has gone to the tranquil blessedness of Heaven. No! it cannot have passed to mere repose; it has either gone to be endowed with far higher powers, or it is extinguished! 'Not to be.' No, no, that is an impossibility if God be all justice and love!" His thoughts seemed to whirl round and round till his brain felt almost affected.

Ha! what sound was that? every one heard it—there passed a tone, a musical note, as it were, through the room—higher and higher it swelled, and then it died away. What could it be?

"Only a string of the pianoforte broken," said the eldest sister.

"Which string?"

"The E string!" she said, as she stooped over the instrument.

"E!—Esther!" he exclaimed hastily; and he remembered what he had once said in jest to Esther, if I die first, and there is an everlasting life, I shall reveal

myself to you, as a chord, or a tone. Esther had taken up these words, and now—he who despised Belief—he with whom proofs visible to the understanding were needed for conviction—he became, at that moment, the child of superstition. This is psychological with many men, and has been exemplified in an old story about a man who determined never to allow himself to be frightened ; neither giant, magician, or ghost caused him the slightest apprehension ; but one fine morning, when he was suddenly awoke very early by a flock of noisy crows, that, flapping their wings, flew past his window, he actually felt that fear which he had never experienced before. The natural, though quite straightforward, when it comes as a surprise, has the power of creating a degree of terror.

Not longer than the short space of time in which the string vibrated lasted that strange thought, or superstitious feeling in his mind ; it faded away when the sound ceased ; but even with him had it thus been shown, “ that we have within us a number of links to the incomprehensible spirit-world.”

His highest earthly prospect of happiness yesterday had been his intimacy with Esther, his hope of possessing her ; her early death might, perhaps, be the means of leading his mind to the more entire development of that change, necessary to place him in the condition in which he might hope to obtain eternal life. But at present he was not able to perceive this ; grief had so taken him by surprise.

The sorrow in that home, the distress of the family, is not what we wish to describe, we must only turn to him to whom the departure of the dead was a step towards life.

Employment is the best means for us to resort to, in battling with sorrow ; but the particular kind of employment, overpowering as it was, in which the necessities of the period involved him, during these dark days of trial in Copenhagen, brought back, at every moment, remembrances of Esther's death ; with every outburst of sorrow in each new home of death was called up the remembrance of that period of suffering.

The cup became too full—it must overflow !

Amidst those who are dear to each other, however far apart, there can exist an intercourse and intimacy of spirit, for communication can take place ; but with the departed, we can, as it were, only live an improving life. Niels Bryde's first, his only love, had been for Esther, it raised him above human weakness ; she herself seemed to be always with him, and internally she was even more so than while she lived, she was the best portion of his earthly life. To her, immortality had been not only a belief, but a certainty—might not her removal from this world be a pledge of its truth ? She was still with him in spirit.

Amidst the migratory birds there exists a desire, an instinct, that brings them through the vast realms of the air to the place which they wish to reach ; the same power guides them back to precisely the same



country, the same place, the same little spot, whence the strange longing and unaccountable sensation drove them : this is a fact which has been known in all ages. The soul of man has a still greater impulse, desire, or longing for an eternal home. Niels felt an assurance of it—then a doubt—a deep, depressing doubt, and this was to him a bitter grief—his heart sunk within him, it would have been better had he never been born !

In Esther's apartment hung several good engravings ; one was offered to Niels Bryde as a souvenir of her, but he begged that he might rather be allowed to have Goethe's "Faust," that book she had so often read, and had written in. Of how much in the past did it not remind him ! It seemed as if the words were still flowing from her lips, still articulated by her musical voice. Within the leaves of the book he found lying, written by Esther's own hand, a copy of the religious old poem

"O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort !"\*

and she had particularly marked the line—

"O Ewigkeit, du machst mir bang,  
O ewig, ewig, ist zu lang !"

Doubtless in the belief in the Bible with which her mind was so thoroughly imbued, Esther had selected and transcribed this excellent poem, this sigh of appre-

\* "Schrecken der Ewigkeit," by Johannes Rist, who lived at the period of the Reformation.

hension, which Niels Bryde had never before read. He felt touched by the striking picture of the sinner—what must he not suffer in everlasting life! Not to speak of water, fire and sword, for these could not be everlasting, but time, countless time—for ever, oh, how long!

The highest destiny that mankind can conceive “to be for ever,” becomes the most fearful punishment, if we are not able through reason to attain to truth—and from truth to goodness. What calls upon us to self-examination, watchfulness, and efforts to win the race appointed to us!

It had been with Goethe’s “Faust,” that Esther had first drawn Niels Bryde, as it were, into the circuit of her mind; in the same book lay, as if placed there for him, the old religious poem about “fear of eternity,” it seemed to sound to him in Esther’s voice from that great eternity. Earthly life is like the entrusted talent, the little that is given us must be so well laid out, as to enable us to become worthy to be made “ruler over many things.” Earthly life is not a portion that we, in our sorrows or sufferings, dare cast from us; we should hold out, struggle on, and labour unceasingly, until we are called into the interminable, that there we may not exclaim in despair,—

“Ewig, ewig, ist zu lang!”

It seemed to him as if Esther hovered around him, as if her thoughts guided his speech: they seemed

still to hold daily communication, and he felt a longing to unite with her in all that had been her conceptions of religion; but he could not entirely do so.

“ I believe in the glory and grandeur of Heaven—*that* we all, of whatever shade of opinion, must acknowledge; I believe in Hell—a place, the sufferings of which are much more dreadful than any that could be occasioned by fire which was never quenched, by the worm which never dies! What are any bodily tortures compared to the soul’s despair at crimes committed wilfully! I believe in God’s love; ‘He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God,’ said Jesus Christ—He who was crucified, He who amidst the agonies of the crucifixion prayed for his enemies. Which of us could attain to such goodness? To Him my heart says, ‘Thou emanation from the living God! I behold Him personally in Thee!’

“ He that seeketh, findeth.”

There was war in his soul. He felt a full assurance of the existence of a God—and he almost believed in Christ, and the immortality of the soul, but not as Esther had done. She had said: “Faith is not the result of thought, it is a gift.”

During the trying years of the war he had first awoke to some sense of truth. Esther’s death had done still more for him. With her had departed the greatest portion of his interest in this world, and his love for her, as he remembered her, became, if possible,

greater than ever. Every word that she had uttered—her arguments in favour of religion, her convictions respecting the Almighty—Jesus Christ, and the immortality of the soul, dwelt in his mind—and often with clasped hands, and earnest anxiety, he would pray, “God—my God ! Grant me true faith !”

Deeply did his spirit feel oppressed, fervent were the prayers that he poured forth, while tears streamed over his cheeks ! At length, however, light beamed upon his soul !

Unhappy those who have never known what God can bid descend into the heart ! How love, grace, can there be felt ! “Faith is not the result of thought, it is a gift.”

That gift had been vouchsafed to Niels Bryde !

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE LAST MEETING WITH THE GIPSY WOMAN.

WE are once more at the Manse, on the heath near Silkeborg, in the summer of 1856. It was the old pastor and his wife's diamond wedding. For sixty years the Almighty had permitted the couple to live together : " Because he hath set his love upon me, with long life will I satisfy him," saith the Psalmist ; and theirs had been a life of love and piety. It was now three years since Esther's death ; twelve years since Niels Bryde had last visited the home of his early youth. About the same period had elapsed since another well-known person had shown herself in the neighbourhood, the gipsy, with her idiot child ; the latter was now two-and-twenty years of age. For some time past he had been accustomed to move about in a sort of wooden machine, but most frequently, especially on long journeys, his mother still carried him on her back. In all weathers, fine, rainy, or stormy, had that woman travelled about with her child, and his smile still made her happy, notwithstanding all the

scorn she met with, and the evil reputation that attended her.

She was returning from the wood, where she had, in vain, this time, sought the ancient tree. She had heard from the peasants how it had fallen branch after branch; still it long remained a mighty though a bare trunk; but the keeper of the woods and forests could not bear the sight of "that hideous old tree," therefore it was cut down, and sold at auction. The peasants, however, loved so much their "Ma-Krokone," that they offered to pay its value in firewood, if it might only be allowed to stand; but by the auction-hammer and the axe fell the old tree, under whose sheltering branches had been born the wanderer, who had looked upon it as an old friend she always longed to see. Alas! it was lost to her, as was Alako's image. The gipsy woman came thence across the sandy plain by Lake Lange, and before her there, as if raised by enchantment, lay a large town, Silkeborg.

A loud barking of dogs greeted her here; from doors and windows scowling looks were bent upon her; workmen, girls, and children stared at her from their doors; some of them followed her at a little distance; and yet the sight of one of the "Jutland gipsies," one of the "Kjeltrings," was not so detestable to them, as it was to her to behold all these changes. She had not expected to find them, and they frightened her. She was making the best of her way

towards the lake, to cross it, as the nearest way to the Manse, near Hvindingedalsbanker: there, at least, she might hope to obtain some shelter and assistance for her sick child: she thought of Bodil, and hoped and trusted to find her there. -

She hastened through the town, passed the large manufactory, and the handsome dwelling-house; a wide, new bridge had been thrown across Lake Lange; she did not need to apply to the ferryman; the house stood there still near the sloping yellow sand, but it was whitewashed, and looked cheerful with a little garden, where roses were blooming. Between these and the road grew a large alder tree; under this she sat down to rest with her suffering, miserable child. Suddenly was heard from the road, on the other side of the lake and town, the sound of a post-horn; a traveller was coming from Horsens by Silkeborg to the Manse near Hvindingedals banker; it was Niels Bryde. She heard the cheerful tones, whilst her heart was breaking with grief.

"My child is dying!" she sobbed, and looked with a mother's tenderness and anxiety on the unfortunate creature, the wretched idiot; his head and the upper part of his body were man-grown, a thin dark beard curled around the lower part of his frightful yellow face, his half-closed eyes looked quite glassy. She was sitting on the ground, and tears were rolling down her cheeks. The heavy burden, which for years she had carried about, God was now about to remove from her;

but that burden was to her a portion of her life ; as necessary to her as the air we breathe is to us.

The alder tree concealed her from Niels Bryde, who was driving past ; he did not observe that memento of his childish days, that Caryatide representation of maternal love. He drove slowly up the hill, and looked out over the surrounding country.

Here was the same waving wood as formerly ; there, lay Himmelbiereg, with its brown, heath-covered summit ; and yonder, the deep white lake glancing in the sun, as he had seen it in his boyhood. Yet all else around was changed ;—a new scene was spread out before his eyes, as if a *Fata Morgana* had been working its wonders on the sandy plain. He beheld rows of white walls and red roofs ; he saw an extensive manufactory, and the owner's mansion, with its blooming, luxuriant gardens, where roses of all kinds perfumed the air, and the well-kept "bowling-greens," like velvet carpets, concealed the sandy soil.

On the lake his eye was caught by a column of dark smoke, it was from a small steamer, that, under the Danish flag, was coming up from Randers, and towing to Gudenaa a barge with iron pipes, to be used in lighting the new town with gas. The noise of steam had broken on the silence of even this distant solitude, the material powers had commenced to exercise their dominion even in these, until then, forgotten regions ! In twelve years all had changed around, and what change had not also taken place in him who was now



contemplating the once familiar scene ! How much had not the last few years of life rooted out, developed, and exalted in him !

Suddenly a piercing shriek was heard, followed by a wailing sound ; Niels Bryde listened, the driver drew up his horses ; groans of deep suffering came from the direction of the alder tree. Niels Bryde got out of the carriage, and proceeded towards the place.

Old and wrinkled sat on the yellow sand, leaning against a sand bank, the gipsy woman—her idiot son was with her. “ He is dying—he is dying ! ” she cried, as she gazed through her tears on him with her wild-bird eyes. Her son’s death-struggle seemed also to convulse the wretched mother.

Niels Bryde hastened to the ferry-house to obtain assistance ; at its door he met a new tenant of the cottage, not the former mistress of the ferry-house, and yet a well-known face ; it was little Karen, who now lived there, having married the old ferryman’s son. The young couple had got the little cottage, and the boat on the lake ; they also derived some profit by receiving the bridge-tolls.

The old mother was not so willing as little Karen to let the gipsy with her suffering son enter the hut. Karen mixed some vinegar-and-water in a cup, and bathed the temples of the dying creature, a wet cloth was placed on the top of his head, this seemed to give him some relief. As yellow as amber, the gipsy stood there, while her eyes wandered around, as if she ex-

pected from some corner, from the window, or the door to the inner room, to see Death suddenly come forward and seize her son. She seemed to be watching anxiously lest a fiend should burst in, and she must be ready to fight with him.

Her eyes wandered over every spot, every individual article in the room, and yet she saw nothing but her child, thought of nothing but him. She seemed afraid to weep ; afraid to breathe almost, lest she should disturb the last weak remnants of life in the being she loved so much. Yet she was now close to the object she had so long sought, in which for years her hopes had been centred, and from which she had expected to obtain health and happy days for her child and herself. But a few steps from her, upon the chest of drawers, lay amidst some cups and saucers, the curious dark stone on which Alako's image was engraved, which the gipsy's mother had lost at Dybdal, and which, as we know, little Karen had found, and had kept for many years.

The gipsy's glance passed over it, she saw it not, and yet it was prominent in her thoughts. "Oh, if I had that image I could lay it upon my child's heart, and he would not die now—I should have him longer with me !" But she did not see it, and did not suspect it was so near her. The poor idiot drew a deep, long breath, it was his last farewell sigh ! He lay there still, as if in quiet sleep.

"He is dead !" said Niels Bryde. The gipsy

woman did not seem to understand him. He repeated, "Dead!" and pointed downwards to the earth; then she cast herself, with a piercing cry, upon the body, and hugged it closely. This was not a time to speak of comfort to her; she could not have listened to it; her impetuous nature must have its wild outburst: afterwards she became quite still. Niels Bryde tried to lift her up from the dead body. At first she only gazed alternately at him and at her child; at length her lips moved, and she muttered—"What? Why?"

"He is dead," said Niels, and again pointed downwards to assist her comprehension; "dead—earth—in the ground."

These words reached her ears—they reached her heart, and were echoed there. Well she knew that as the withered rosebush can never bloom in beauty, so her child could never have become a strong man; but now that he should only be "Earth—in the ground!" No! she remembered that once when her mother had taken a grain of Indian corn out of a mummy's clenched hand, in which it had lain for four thousand years, she planted it in some rich ground, upon which the warm rays of the sun shed their vivifying influence, and that it sprouted; that there came up a stem and leaves, and the plant bore a hundredfold. "If the grain of corn that had lain shut up in the hand of the dead, could thus thrive and bear fruit after thousands of years, why should

my child—a human soul—because for years he had been a sufferer from illness, why should he not, when he is put in the earth, rise again under the sun of life, and be strong and happy ? Assuredly he shall live again ! He will become beautiful ; he will be full of health and vigour, with bright eyes and rosy lips, where Alako dwells !”

Such were the thoughts of the gipsy woman, as she arose from the ground on which the corpse was lying. She leaned her elbow against the chest of drawers, and her glance wandered about. Suddenly her lips trembled, her eyes dilated, and like a hawk she pounced upon the dark stone that bore Alako’s image, seized it, gazed upon it in great agitation, and kissed it reverentially. “ Alako !” she cried, almost shrieked, “ my child will not die !—he will not die ! He will live for ever !” And she sank by his side, overcome by the strong emotions of her overburdened heart.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE NEW ALADDIN.

NIELS BRYDE was expected at the Manse ; the day of his arrival now would be one of the most important epochs in the history of its occupants' lives, and the subsequent day the most interesting and conspicuous—it would be the day of the aged couple's *diamond wedding*. But at present all their thoughts were with Niels. Each rejoiced according to his or her peculiar feelings, but all were happy to see him again. Twelve years had elapsed since he had last been with them. Twelve additional years in old age makes some people more irritable, but others much milder, and our old friends had become more lenient and forbearing.

Bodil ran out at every sound, for she always fancied she heard the noise of an approaching carriage. At length the guest arrived.

There were tears, there was joy ! How much they were all surprised, at first, at the great change in his appearance, but in the course of a few minutes they recognised the well-remembered features. The eyes were the same, the smile was the same, the voice but

little altered, the still youthful energy of his mind was apparent in the more matured form. His countenance expressed his thoughts, and few words were needed to explain these.

As when after a day of hard and uninterrupted labour, one has slept long and soundly without dreaming, one wakes up, so Niels Bryde felt in being again in the home of his childhood.

The musician Grethe, now a very aged woman, had made her way to the Manse, and played to welcome him. The old, well-known tones, the old, well-known faces, the whole scene of his boyhood—all were as they used formerly to be. They conversed till late in the evening, there was no strife, nothing unpleasant, they met in affection and mutual indulgence.

The morning of the festival, the fifth of August, arrived; it was a charming day. From the lately-built town on the banks of Lake Lange in the early morning music was heard approaching; the French horn played, and voices sang some beautiful psalms. The old couple embraced each other, gladness sparkling in their eyes, for their souls were young, as in years long gone by.

Bodil, Niels, and all their old friends in the neighbourhood, received them in the drawing-room, which was adorned with flowers, brought from the gardens of Silkeborg; articles of various kinds of needlework, and other presents, in profusion, were displayed on the tables; outside, carriages were waiting to take them

to church, whither they all went. The bells rang, the sun shone brightly, as in the earlier days of their love, and near the church were assembled the congregation, men, women, and children. They uncovered their heads, and joyfully surrounded the aged couple who were fêted that day. Meanwhile, the old organ burst forth in a solemn anthem.

In such a place, listening to such tones, had Niels Bryde not been, in a similar frame of mind, since the last time, that before his student days, he had been there as a pious child. There is a peculiar power in the sacred sanctuary where home-recollections linger, in the well-remembered, old melodies, which exalt us over, and carry us away from the scenes of every-day life.

The psalm-singing of the congregation, and the children's voices mingling with those of the grown-up people, reminded him of those early days when his own voice used to unite in the psalmody; then came rushing on his mind, in one wide retrospect, as it were, all the years that had passed between that time and the period of Esther's death—Esther, his bride before God! With the purest love his thought followed her image, she who, like a light and guide to him, had been thrown into his pathway in this world. Whatever happens to us is best for us! Every grief is good for the improvement of the soul. He remembered the early death of his parents, when he was cast a helpless child, among strangers, and that had been for his good; the

trying years of the war had taught him sad lessons, but they had been fraught with benefit to him; even sickness and suffering had been a fountain of mercy to him—whose health-giving waters had strengthened him; the shock of Esther's death had awakened him to life! Better otherwise the school of life could not have been! That had become a reality which he once dreamed as a child, that, like Aladdin, he had descended into a cavern, where thousands of treasures and shining fruits almost blinded him; but he found the wonderful lamp, and when he brought it home it was—his mother's Bible.

Yes! Like a new Aladdin, he had descended deep into the magic caverns of science, amidst its wondrous treasures, to find the lamp of life, and he came forth with his mother's old Bible, not its substance, but its divine spirit!

With the re-awakened feelings of his childhood, that had unconsciously become imbued with faith, science became a glorification of God's power, wisdom, and divinity. The laws of nature, the plan, so to term it, God permits the spirit of man, in a great measure, to discover and unfold; but the laws of love, in the spiritual kingdom, science cannot soar to. Upon this earth, we are only able to seize what belongs to earth—in the higher spirit-world we can but have HOPE and FAITH.

The sunshine streamed in through the windows of the church upon the congregation in their holiday attire, upon the aged couple, who stood like a bridal



pair before the altar—there was sunshine also in every heart, happy to be there, blessed in the hope always “to be !”

Late in the evening of the festival day, when all was again quiet at the Manse, and every one had retired to rest, the old people put up a prayer, which they trusted would be heard on high, especially at the close of that remarkable day, which they had been permitted to live to see. Niels had good principles, of that they were convinced, but was he in all respects a true Christian, had he their belief, the only right one ? They prayed God to grant him that, for Jesus Christ’s sake.

Niels Bryde had been much impressed by the ceremonies of that day. He also was engaged in prayer at the same hour—his prayer was for the aged couple. “Almighty God ! their hearts have been penetrated by thy grace ! They believe—but without knowledge ; that has been sufficient for them in this life. But yonder, on the other side of the grave, make thy mighty grandeur visible to them, bestow on them light as well as peace, that they may dwell in Thee, having put their faith in Christ !”

Bodil prayed that the spirit of peace, that the knowledge and love of God and Christ, and all that is so essential to human beings here, might be granted to each and all of them ; and that good-will, mutual indulgence, and sincere affection might dwell among them all.

In, upon them all, in their several chambers, shone,

brightly and cheerily, a large clear star. Niels Bryde called it by its scientific name, "Jupiter;" the old people and Bodil thought of it as the "eye of God," that beamed upon them, as well as upon the Turks, the heathens, and the misled Mormons—elevating the thoughts of all who gazed at it.

Bodil and her aged parents said the Lord's Prayer; Niels Bryde also murmured it in his soul; and sleep came—sleep the brother of death—that takes the third part of our earthly life from us in the drama of "To be, or not to be?"

They slept, they dreamed of the brilliant star, a spark only to look at, and yet a world, larger than ours—which hereafter will be known to us. Yes! what shall not be made manifest to us, when divine Love has removed us to yonder spheres where we shall BE, and BE FOR EVER!









